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INTRODUCTION.

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The idea of the following Poem was taken from a Picture by Mr. M'Clise, called "The Vow of the Peacock," exhibited this year at Somerset House. I have attempted to attach a narrative to the brilliant scene represented by the painting.

The fact of a lady in distress applying to some renowned knight for assistance, belongs as much to the history of chivalry as to its romance. Vows on the heron, the pheasant, and the peacock, to do some deed of arms, were common in the olden time. My story, founded on this picturesque custom, is entirely fanciful, though its scenes and manners are strictly historical.

L. E. L.

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THE

VOW OF THE PEACOCK.

THE present! it is but a drop from the sea
In the mighty depths of eternity.
I love it not—it taketh its birth
Too near to the dull and the common earth.
It is worn with our wants, and steeped with our cares,
The dreariest aspect of life it wears;
Its griefs are so fresh, its wrongs are so near,
That its evils of giant shape appear;
The curse of the serpent, the sweat of the brow,
Lie heavy on all things surrounding us now.

Filled with repining, and envy, and strife,
What is the present—the actual of life?
The actual! it is as the clay to the soul,
The working-day portion of life's wondrous whole!
How much it needeth the light and the air
To breathe their own being, the beautiful, there!
Like the soil that asks for the rain from the sky,
And the soft west wind that goes wandering by,
E'er the wonderful world within will arise
And rejoice in the smile of the summer's soft eyes.

The present—the actual—were they our all—
Too heavy our burthen, too hopeless our thrall;
But heaven, that spreadeth o'er all its blue cope,
Hath given us memory,—hath given us hope!
And redeemeth the lot which the present hath cast,
By the fame of the future, the dream of the past.

The future! ah, there hath the spirit its home,
In its distance is written the glorious to come.
The great ones of earth lived but half for their day;
The grave was their altar, the far-off their way.
Step by step hath the mind its high empire won;
We live in the sunshine of what it hath done.

The present! it sinketh with sorrow and care,
That but for the future, it never could bear;
We dwell in its shadow, we see by its light,
And to-day trusts to-morrow, it then will be bright.

The maiden who wanders alone by the shore,
And bids the wild waters the dear one restore;
Yet lingers to listen the lute notes that swell
As the evening winds touch the red lips of the shell.
She thinks of the time when no longer alone
Another will thank those sweet shells for their tone:

They soothed her with music, the soft and the deep,
That whispered the winds, and the waves were asle·
Such music, hope brings from the future to still
Humanity vexed with the presence of ill.

The past! ah, we owe it a tenderer debt,
Heaven's own sweetest mercy is not to forget;
Its influence softens the present, and flings
A grace, like the ivy, wherever it clings.
Sad thoughts are its ministers — angels that keep
Their beauty to hallow the sorrows they weep.
The wrong, that seemed harsh to our earlier mood,
By long years with somewhat of love is subdued;—
The grief, that at first had no hope in its gloom,
Ah, flowers have at length sprung up over the tomb.
The heart hath its twilight, which softens the scene,
While memory recalls where the lovely hath been.

It builds up the ruin, restores the grey tower,
Till there looks the beauty still from her bower.
It leans o'er the fountain, and calls from the wave
The naiad that dwelt with her lute in the cave;—
It bends by the red rose, and thinketh old songs:—
That leaf to the heart of the lover belongs.
It clothes the grey tree with the green of its spring,
And brings back the music the lark used to sing.
But spirits yet dearer attend on the past,
When alone, 'mid the shadows the dim hearth has cast;
Then feelings come back, that had long lost their tone,
And echo the music that once was their own.
Then friends, whose sweet friendship the world could divide,
Come back with kind greetings, and cling to our side.
The book which we loved when our young love was strong;—

An old tree long cherished; a nursery song;—
A walk slow and pleasant by field and by wood;—
The winding 'mid water-plants of that clear flood,
Where lilies, like fairy queens, looked on their glass,—
That stream we so loved in our childhood to pass.
Oh! world of sweet phantoms, how precious thou art!
The past is perpetual youth to the heart.

The past is the poet's,—that world is his own;
Thence hath his music its truth and its tone.
He calls up the shadows of ages long fled,
And light, as life lovely, illumines the dead.
And the beauty of time, with wild flowers and green,
Shades and softens the world-worn, the harsh and the mean.
He lives, he creates, in those long-vanished years—
He asks of the present but audience and tears.

Years, years have past along
Since the sword, and since the song
Made alike the bright and bold —
What one wrought — the other told.
When the lady in her bower
Held her beauty's conscious power;
When the knight's wild life was spent
Less in castle than in tent;
When romance, excitement, strife,
Flung the picturesque o'er life.

Lo, the past yields up an hour
To the painter's magic power—
Mastered into life and light,
Breathing beautiful and bright,—
One bright hour in glory dyed
Of the old chivalric pride.

With war-music round them poured,
With the sunshine on the sword,
With the battlemented towers,
Crimsoning in the morning hours,
Girdled by their southern clime,
Stand a group of olden time.
They are gathered,—wherefore now?
'Tis the Peacock's noble vow!
Vow that binds a knightly faith
Sure as love and strong as death.

Doth that kneeling bright-haired dame
Succour or protection claim?
Is she wronged, is she forsaken?
Wherefore must that vow be taken?
What wild tale of old romance
Haunteth that bright lady's glance?

What proud deed of coming fight
Bares the blade of yonder knight?
Dare I give the colours words,—
Ask their music from the chords?

In sooth it was as fair a court
As ever in a morn of May,
Amid the greenwood's glad resort,
Made a perpetual holiday.
'Tis true she was a queen no more,
But still her robe the ermine bore;
And in her hand, and in her eye,
Was that which spoke of courts gone by:
For Catherine looked what she had been,
At once the beauty and the queen.

Both had their grief, whose memory throws
A deeper charm around repose.
She knew the worth of quiet hours,
Past true and loving hearts among,
Whose history might be writ on flowers,
Or only chronicled in song.
Methinks, were it my lot to choose,
As my lot it will never be,
I'd colour life with those same hues
That, lady! coloured life for thee.
Thou, to whom life enough was known—
The moon-lit bower, the court, the throne;
The heart that maketh its own snare,
Passion and power, and grief and care;
Till the soul, saddened and subdued,
Rejoiced in haunted solitude.

Youth is too eager, forth it flings
Itself upon exulting wings,
Which seek the heaven they ask too near—
One wild flight ends the bright career;
With broken wing and darkened eye,
Earth claims again its own to die.
No! solitude asks bygone hours
Wherewith to fill its silent bowers,—
Memories that linger o'er the past,
But into softer shadow cast,
Like lovely pictures that recall
One look, but that most dear of all.
When life's more fierce desires depart,
Aware how false and vain they are,—
While youth yet lingers at the heart,
And hope, although it looks afar,—

Then takes the lute, its softest tone,
It murmurs of emotions gone.
Then charms the picture most, it brings
So many unforgotten things.
Then breathes within the gifted scroll
A deeper meaning to the soul,—
For that itself hath learnt before
The truth and secret of its lore.

Few know such blessed breathing time
As she, whose home beside the sea,
Beneath that lovely summer clime,
Seems such a fairy dream to me.
Within a fair Italian hall,
Round which an olive wood extends,
With summer for her festival,—
For camp and court a few tried friends,

The Queen of Cypress dwelt,—the last
That ever ruled that lovely isle;
The sceptre from her hand she cast,
And Venice wore her crown the while,
Whose winged lion loved to sweep
Sole master of his bride—the deep.
Her history is upon her face;
Titian hath kept its pensive grace.

Divinest art, that can restore
The lovely and the loved of yore!
Her cheek is pale, her mouth is wrought
With lines that tell of care and thought,
But sweet, and with a smile, that seems
To brood above a world of dreams.
And with an eye of that clear blue,
Like heaven when stars are shining through,

The pure, the spiritual, the clear,
Whose light is of another sphere.
It was an eve when June was calling
The red rose to its summer state,
When dew-like tears around are falling —
Such tears as upon pity wait.
The woods obscured the crimson west,
Which yet shone through the shadowy screen
Like a bright sea in its unrest,
With gold amid the kindling green.
But softer lights and colours fall
Around the olive-sheltered hall,
Which, opening to a garden, made
Its own, just slightly broken, shade.
Beneath a marble terrace spread,
Veined with the sunset's flitting red.

And lovely plants, in vases, there
Wore colours caught in other skies;
Sweet prisoners, such—because so fair,
Made captives for their radiant eyes.
And in the centre of that room
A fountain, like an April shower,
Brought light—and bore away perfume
To many a pale and drooping flower,
That, wearied with the sultry noon,
Languished at that sweet water's tune.

The silvery sigh of that soft strain
Had lulled the lady and her train;
And she—her thoughts were far away—
Gone back unto that earlier day,
When heart and hope alike were young.
The tears within her eyelids sprung,

They mingled with the fountain-stream —
It was too sweet, too sad a dream.
"What," said she, "is the singer mute?
Come young Azalio, take thy lute,
And tell me of those ancient days
Thou dost so love to sing and praise.
Hast thou no legend, minstrel mine,
Of my own old heroic line;
Some tale of Cyprus, ere her strand
Was won to the Venetian's land?
Ah! ocean's loved and loveliest ark,
Thou did'st not always own St. Mark!
Hast thou no chronicle to tell
Of that fair land I love so well?"
A pale and silent youth was he
Who took the lute upon his knee.

But now his inmost heart was stirred;
He rose at his sweet sovereign's word:
A word to whose low tones were given
All he dreamed music was in heaven.
Ah! love and song are but a dream,
A flower's faint shade on life's dark stream.
He sang—he loved; though heart and strain
Alike might love and sing in vain.
Looks not the lover, nor the bard,
Beyond the present's sweet reward;
Enough to feel the heart is full
With hopes that charm, and dreams that lull.
One such impassioned hour is worth
A thousand common days of earth;
They know not how intense the beating
Of hearts where love and song are meeting.

He took the lute — he gave it words,
And breathed his spirit on the chords.
The world, save one sweet face, was dim;
And that shone o'er his lute and him.

THE VOW OF THE PEACOCK.

There is a city, that for slaves
Has kings, and nations, winds, and waves:
St. Mark is conscious of her power,
His winged lion marks her tower.
But that the bold republic stood,
And bought her empire with her blood,
The crescent's pale and silver lines
Would shine where now the red cross shines.

But victory is a chained thing,
Beneath her haughty lion's wing.

One eve the sun was redly shining,
Crimson, as it is now declining,
When e'en the dark canals were bright
A moment with that rosy light;
How glorious did its colours sweep,
As if in triumph o'er the deep.

One wandered there, whose gazing eye
Deserved to mirror such a sky.
He of the laurel and the lyre,
Whose lip was song, whose heart was fire —
The gentle Petrarch — he whose fame
Was worship of one dearest name.
The myrtle planted on his grave,
Gave all the laurel ever gave;

The life that lives in others' breath—
Love's last sweet triumph over death.
And tell me not of long disdain,
Of hope unblest — of fiery pain,—
Of lute and laurel vowed in vain.
Of such the common cannot deem;
Such love hath an ethereal pride!
I'd rather feed on such a dream,
Than win a waking world beside.

He wandered, lonely, while his gaze
Mused o'er the sunset's failing rays;
When, lo! he saw a vessel ride,
As if in triumph o'er the tide.
Amid her sails were green boughs wreathing,
And music from her deck was breathing;

And from the mast a banner's fold
Flung forth its purple and its gold.
Now joy in Venice!—she has brought
Glad tidings of a battle fought:
The last of a victorious war,
She brings them triumph from afar.
Yet, further on, the dim and dark,
On the horizon hangs a bark;
A sad, small speck: o'er which a cloud
Hangs heavy, like a funeral shroud;

While others marked the ship that came
From fields of battle and of fame;
And told, with loud acclaim, the while,
The conquest proud of Candia's isle.
The poet lingered last to mark
The progress of that lonely bark.

He watched the worn and weary sail;
I would that he had told its tale!
Then, honoured like a thing divine,
I had not dared to make it mine.

Upon that deck a lady stands,
The fairest that e'er wrung her hands;
Or bowed a radiant brow to weep
Over the wide unpitying deep.
And leave we Venice to her hour
Of festival, and pride, and power,
To learn whate'er the cause can be
That brings such maiden o'er the sea.

The Queen of Cyprus is the maid,
But banished from her throne and land;
She comes to seek for foreign aid,
Against a false and factious band.

Ah, minstrel song hath many wings!
From foreign lands its wealth it brings.
And it had brought, o'er sea and sky,
The tidings of Leoni's fame,
Till hope and honour seemed to lie
Beneath the shadow of his name.
Irene's ear had often heard
The glory given to his sword;
And when she fled her prison-tower,
Ah! such a bird, for such a bower,
It was to seek the sea-beat strand
Where dwelt the hero and his band;
And ask that succour no true knight
Ere yet denied to lady bright.

They landed where a little bay
Flung o'er the shelving sands its spray;

And mingled with the rain, which kept
Perpetual moan, as if it wept.
While winds, amid the hollow caves,
Told the sad secrets of the waves.

It was a gloomy night—and, pale,
That young queen drew her mourning veil,
Which ill could screen that slender form
From the rude beating of the storm.
A convent reared upon the height,
Gave shelter from the closing night.
Thankful was that bright head to rest,
For charity's sweet sake, their guest.

It was a mournful sight to see
That youthful brow lie down
Without its purple canopy,
Without its royal crown;

A rugged pallet which was laid
Upon the floor of stone,
Thro' whose dark chinks the night winds play'd
With low, perpetual moan;
A death's head telling from the wall—
"Thy heart beats high—but this ends all!"
A crucifix, a pictured saint,
With thin worn lip and colours faint,
All whereon youth loves not to dwell,—
Were gathered in that gloomy cell.
I said, 'twas sad to see such head
Laid lowly in so rude a bed;
Eyes, long accustomed to unclose
Where sighed the lute, where breathed the rose,
Not for the lack of state or gold,
But for the hist'ry which it told.

The youthful sleeper slumbering there,
With the pale moonlight in her hair;
Her child-like head upon her arm,
Cradling the soft cheek, rosy warm;
The sweet mouth opening like a flower,
Whose perfume fills the midnight hour;
Her white hands clasped, as if she kept
A vigil even while she slept:
Or, as her rest too long delaying,
Slumber stole over her while praying.
Yet this is not the dreamless sleep
That youth should know;—the still, the deep!
See, on her cheek th' unquiet red
A sudden crimson flush has shed!
And now it fades, as colours die,
While watching twilight's transient sky.

And now 'tis deadly pale in hue;
On the wan forehead stands the dew!
The small white hands are clenched and wrung:
She wakes! how wild a look is flung
From those blue eyes which, strange and wide,
Glance, like the deer's, from side to side!
She listens; but she cannot hear,
So loudly beats her heart with fear.
Gradual she knows the lonely cell —
She hears the midnight's bell;
She sees the moonlight on the pane,
And, weary, drops her head again.

Alas! the steps of that young queen
Upon life's rudest path have been.
An orphan! ah, despair is heard
In but the echo of that word!

Left in her infancy, alone,
On that worst solitude—a throne,
Ill suited was that small snow hand
To sway the sceptre, or the brand.
In truth, the Cypriots need a lord
Who curbs a steed, and wears a sword;
And a bold chieftain of their line
Had victor come from Palestine:
Fierce, ruthless, false, the crown he sought,
Nor recked how dearly it was bought.
Till lately had Irene been
In outward state and show a queen!
And she had been a toy and tool,
To grace each adverse faction's rule.
But when the bold usurper's claim
Asked royal place, and royal name;

Made captive in a treacherous hour,
She pined within a sea-beat tower.
At length a small and faithful band
Escape and rescue bravely planned;
They set the royal captive free,
And bore the maiden o'er the sea!
And now the lady comes to ask
Of chivalry its glorious task:
Aid at the brave Leoni's hand,
To win her back her father's land.
Three days have passed, for she was worn
With all that slender frame had borne;
But tidings came that Venice gave
A general welcome to the brave,
And that a hundred hearts were bent
Upon the morrow's tournament.

Leoni, too, had raised his spear,
Impatient for the high career,
Where deeds of honour would be done,
In honour of the triumph won.

The following morn that sacred shrine
Saw toys and gauds unwonted shine.
The ivy o'er the lattice hung
Back, for a freer light was flung.
O'er the grey pallet were unrolled
Silks heavy with the weight of gold.
The caskets are unlocked, that shew
Pearls glittering like untrodden snow:
The diamond, like stars at night;
The emerald, which has caught the light
Of early sunbeams, when they pass
Over the dewy morning grass.

The Queen of Cyprus, she has now
No empire but her own sweet brow —
No other influence than what lies
In the deep azure of her eyes.
But she who hath such look and mien
Is still the hearts' enthroned queen.
Her maiden train, with curious care,
Knit the rich tresses of her hair;
And never king had carved gold
Like those bright lengths together rolled,
With sunshine gathered in each fold.
The velvet robe with gold was laced,
And jewels bound the slender waist:
They suited well her high degree,
And queen-like look and step had she!
She saw her graceful shadow fall
O'er the small mirror in the wall;

Then like the swan with statelier swell,
She past the threshold of her cell.
No knight could see that lip and eye,
And boon, which they might ask, deny!
Thy smile securing thy behest,
Go, lady, in thy loveliest.

The morning! 'tis a glorious time,
Recalling to the world again
The Eden of its earlier prime,
Ere grief, or care, began their reign.
When every bough is wet with dews,
Their pure pale lit with crimson hues;
Not wan, as those of evening are,
But pearls unbraided from the hair
Of some young bride who leaves the glow
Of her warm cheek upon their snow.

The lark is with triumphant song
Singing the rose-touched clouds among:
'Tis there that lighted song has birth,
What hath such hymn to do with earth?
Each day doth life again begin,
And morning breaks the heart within,
Rolling away its clouds of night,
Renewing glad the inward light.
Many a head that down had lain,
Impatient with its twelve hours' pain,
And wishing that the bed it prest,
Were, as the grave's, a long last rest,
Has sprung again at morning's call,
Forgiving, or forgetting all;
Lighting the weary weight of thought
With colours from the day-break brought,

Reading new promise in the sky,
And hearing Hope, the lark on high.

But what must morning be to those
Who sleep impatient of repose,
The hand upon the spear and shield
Which wait the morrow's glorious field.
The tournament, where Venice asks
All who delight in honour's tasks.
The Count Leoni sees his band
With helm on head and spear in hand,
And proud, he marked the sunbeams shine
Over the long embattled line,
And said, exulting, "They are mine!"
No chief were he who could have eyed
Such soldiers without chieftain's pride!

Plumed, and full armed from head to heel,
They sat like statues carved in steel.
He of that body was the soul,
To lead, to curb, inspire, control.

And wherefore does the warrior wait?
His steed is pawing at the gate,—
His page is with his helmet near,—
He has kissed his cousin's farewell tear.—
He lingers—for a dwarf that seems
More like a creature framed in dreams,
'Mid midnight's strange fantastic strife,
Than being formed of actual life,
Has prayed him for a moment there
To listen to a lady's prayer.
And ever true knight owns the claim
Whose suit is urged in woman's name.

Stately as night, and fair as day,
The lovely lady made her way
Through armed ranks, that bent to her
As if she were a conqueror:
Then bending on her graceful knee
Her lowly suit she made,
And prayed him of his courtesy
To give an orphan aid;
And leave the tourney for the far,
And fatal scenes of actual war.

The colour kindled on his cheek,
A moment and he could not speak;
Then silence hastily broke he,
And said, "Oh, fairest dame!
Henceforth my sword is vowed to thee,
And asks no other fame.

I pray thee rise, it were more meet
For me to kneel before thy feet,
And vow to thee, as at a shrine,
That heart, and hand, and sword, are thine."
Hope kindled in Irene's eyes,
Yet from her knee she would not rise,
But spoke again: "If true art thou,
Take thou the Peacock's sacred vow."
Her listening maidens caught the word,
And forth they brought the royal bird;
The glorious bird, to whom is given
The colour of an eastern heaven.

Of all the fowls that sweep the air
None with the Peacock may compare;
Not only for its loveliness,
Though queens in vain might ask such dress,

But o'er those painted plumes are cast
So many shadows from the past,—
Those gorgeous ships which wont to bring
The wealth of Ophir to that king
Who ransacked earth and swept the main,
To find their pleasures were in vain.
Or from those purple feathers peep
Faces which they have lulled to sleep,
Cheeks of pale beauty, and dark eyes
Wherein their eastern heaven lies;
But tearful in their sleep, with dreams
Of unforgotten mountain streams.
Ah, childhood! lovely art thou, seen
When care and passion intervene,
And thou dost smile as smiles a star,—
Calm, happy, undisturbed, but far.

And such a memory thou hast stirred
Within my heart, enchanted bird!
I see a little garden nook,
It has a lorn deserted look;
Conscious of better days, and pride
To its neglected state denied:
Yet is it lovely, or to me
Lovely at least it seemed to be:
Laurels stood shining in the sun—
A golden green, half light, half gloom;
Some early flowers to seed had run,
But some were only just in bloom;
And straggling over path and bed,
The careless ones shone white and red.
Spoilt children they, who wander on
Till summer and themselves are gone.

But in the midst a plot of grass
Was to the sunshine as a glass;
It had been turf, but weeds and flowers
Had sprung through long-neglected hours.

There stood an aged trunk, 'twas grey
With moss and nature's slow decay.
Yet there a peacock used to come
He chose it for his summer home;
A brave bright bird, whose graceful head
Stooped daily to my hand for bread.
Then would he take his glittering stand,
While to the sun his plumes expand.
So from th' empurpled waves arise
Such colours when the dolphin dies.
I loved it for its beauty's blaze,
I love it now for by-gone days.

Whene'er I see that bird it brings
A world of long-forgotten things,—
Romantic fancies, boldly planned,
For childhood is a fairy land,
And scorns to work by common means
The fair woof of its future scenes;
Hopes which, like dew-drops o'er the plain,
The very sunshine turns to rain;
Affections long since past away.—
But this is vain—on with my lay.

The golden dish is richly chased
On which the royal bird is placed;
And lovely are the bearers twain,
Who there the gorgeous weight sustain.
The one is fair, as that meek flower
The lily, hiding in her bower;

Fair as the north, whose sky and snows
Give softest white and purest rose.
The other—such soft shadows weave
The sweet shapes of a southern eve.
The fringed lashes darkly bend
Where moon-beams and where meteors blend,—
Eyes, full of danger and delight,
Where softness and where fire unite.

Before the armed knight they stand,
Then flashes forth his eager brand;
So help him God! as he shall fight
For honour and his lady's right;
So help him God! as he shall be
True to his faith, his sword, and thee.
She watched him while he swore—that queen
So fair a knight had never seen—

The past, to which she turned, grew dim,
How could she think, and not of him?
Oh! sweet and sudden fire that springs
With but a look to light its wings;
How false to say thou needest time
The bright ascent of hope to climb;
A star thou art, that may not be
Reckoned by dull astronomy!
Henceforth Irene's heart must keep
A treasure!—silent, still, and deep.
A torture!—no one Love hath known,
Only the lovely and the lone.
His very favourites but possess
Gleams of unquiet happiness.
Love's gifts are like the vein of gold
That intersects earth's darker mould;

The gold is gained, the coin is wrought;
But how much trouble has it brought?
Alas! not her's the only gaze
Which too deep tenderness betrays;
Nor her's the only ear that hung
On the war music of his tongue.
A girl behind Leoni stands,
His scarf is in her trembling hands;
Scarce hath she power to bid each fold
Hang graceful with its blue and gold;
She droops beneath her shrouding veil,
Her lip, her cheek, are touched with pale;
A fear hath entered at her heart,—
Take life, so that fear also part.
His ward and cousin she has grown
Within Leoni's halls;

A flower which no rude wind hath blown,
O'er which no shadow falls.
So gradual has the maiden sprung
To womanhood's sweet prime;
So soft the shadow round her flung
By that enchanted time,
That still she seems the child to be
Who wandered at his side,
Beneath the summer's greenwood tree
And by the sea's blue tide;
And heaping treasure for her bower
Of singing shell and breathing flower.
But on her brow there is a shade
Scarcely for early April made:
But 'tis the heart that marks the hour;
And hers, in passion and in power,

Has long outgrown the simple fears
And buoyant hopes of childhood's years.
Love gathereth knowledge; and that tree
Hath good and ill in its degree;
With many an unaccustomed guest
It stirs the spirit in its rest.
Emotions generous, deep, and strong,
That bear the fevered soul along;
Shame, hidden in a rosy cloud,
By it's own sweet self disallowed;
Fancies that make their own distress,
And doubts that question happiness.
Love brings all these—he cannot bring
Again its freshness to the spring.

Orphan, or ere her footsteps knew
The weary earth they were to tread;

The love which with her stature grew,
Caught something mournful from the dead;
And her young spirit quenched its tone
Too much with dwelling on the gone.
She sat beside her mother's grave,
And thought of him, the loved, the brave;
He who had been the only guide
Of his betrothed and orphan bride.
Thus had she grown, a lonely child
Like the wood-flower, as sweet and wild;
The darling and delight of all
Within the old ancestral hall;
None looked beyond the brow the while,
Which still was sweet with childhood's smile.

How often has the maiden felt,
When at Leoni's feet she knelt,

Unquiet thoughts her joy disturb,
And shadowy fears she could not curb;
Still in her soul the whisper came,
"I love him—is his love the same?"
Love's instinct prompt at once to reach
All that experience soon must teach;
Then flinging down the chain and gem
He deemed she must delight to wear;
How could she care for toys like them;
How could he think that she could care?
Then would he raise the golden head
Whose bright hair drooped around his knee;
And question what she wished instead,
And promised what she wished should be.
And, like a petted child, carest
The eyes which she had downcast kept,

Grew yet more tearful thus addrest,
In wonder wherefore she had wept.
She did not know herself; so much
Does the young heart itself deceive:
If love—she did not dream it such,—
She only felt that she must grieve;
And marvelled with a sweet surprise
Tears were so ready in her eyes.
She blushed them off, and put on mirth;
The mask youth ever wears to hide
The deeper feelings that have birth
In shame, in passion, and in pride.

At the first look Leoni turned
Upon that fair and stranger dame,

Her inmost heart within her burned,
A light upon her darkness came.
Past, present, future, seemed to fling
Their weight upon that moment's wing;
A shadow fell upon the air,
The presence of one great despair.

Small time has she for thought; to day
The courteous hostess she must play.
The gathered bands are glad to hear
Of nobler warfare for their spear.
All kindle in one mutual flame,
For such a cause and such a dame;
All crowd within that ancient hall
To share the parting festival.
To-morrow with the morning breeze,
Their gallant fleet will cut the seas.

The banquet shall be spread to-night;
The cup shall circle now
For that fair lady and her knight,
And for "the Peacock's Vow."

Amenaïde hath ta'en her seat
Beside the radiant stranger's feet;
Whose purple canopy on high
The golden step and chair;
But most that regal form and eye
Her regal state declare.
Leoni serves her on his knee,
But, with a fairy smile,
She says such homage must not be,
And she his guest the while.
With softest look and courteous word
She bids him carve the royal bird.

He carves it with a curious skill,
And when his task was done,
The little flame was burning still
That from its bright beak shone.

He pledged the purple cup that night,
His soul drank brighter wine
Than ever filled a cup with light
Or made the hour divine;
As if its passing shade had caught
All treasures that a life had sought.

Ah, no—a deeper joy he drank
Than ever floated on the bowl,
A joy, that coloured while it sank
In sweet enchantment on the soul.
The rosy thraldom of the vine
Would vanish with the morning's shine;

But he who wakes from such a dream,
Wakes never more to dream again;
The hues have died on life's dull stream,
Which seeks that earlier light in vain.
But who e'er turned from beauty's ray
For feat of future shade;
Or who e'er flung a rose away
Because that rose might fade.
It was a new-born joy to watch
Those blue eyes sink beneath his own;
The colour of the blush to catch,
The colour which his gaze had thrown
Upon a cheek, else pale and fair
As lilies in the summer air.

Amenaïde sat watching by,
With kindled cheek and flashing eye;

She saw before the rest,—to her
Her own heart was interpreter.—
She knew the fixed, yet timid look,
As if the soul some treasure took;—
She knew the soft, yet eager tone;
So had she looked, so had she spoken:
The past now made the present known
By many a sad familiar token.
Ah! those who love can well divine
The slightest look, the merest sign.—
And she was gay,—though love is strong,
Yet pride is stronger still;
She felt, but shewed not of her wrong—
It mastered not her will.
Strange! her young heart could have such power
Upon its most impassioned hour.

"Ah! call it by some dearer name—
The effort made by maiden shame
Its agony of soul to hide,
It is too deep, too soft for pride.

"
Upon her cheek a burning red,
But richly beautiful, is shed;
So kindles on the funeral pyre
The flame by perfume fed:—
How few remember that sweet fire
Is rising o'er the dead.
And clouds grow crimson with the glow
Of the poor human dust below.—
The light which that young cheek illumed
Came from all precious things consumed;
Hopes, dreams, ere those bright hues depart,
Sent from the ashes of the heart.

The stranger queen had lifted up
In her small hands the golden cup,
And drank her timid thanks to all
Gathered within Leoni's hall;
But he—he saw that azure eye
Grow softer as it passed him by,
And indistinct her voice became
Beneath the music of his name.
She left the hall, she past like light;
So in the east comes sudden night.
She past—so graceful glides the swan
Some lone and lovely lake upon.
And sought her chamber,—it was fair
With perfume on the midnight hour;
Amenaïde, with graceful care,
Had made it like a fairy's bower.

She placed within the fragrant light—
Then bade her weary guest good-night.
A moment more and she was gone:
Both were so glad to be alone.

But soon Irene's eyelids close
'Mid those sweet visions which repose,
Gathering their fragrant life by day
From violet bells and hawthorn spray—
I hold that in the noontide hours
Sweet dreams are treasured up in flowers.
But for Amenaïde, her head
Reposed not on its silken bed;
Ah! what have eyes to do with sleep
That seek, and vainly seek, to weep?
No dew on the dark lash appears,—
The heart is all too full for tears.

Awhile she paced her stately room—
She felt its heat, she felt its gloom—
The tapestry o'er the walls that hung
Flung shadows it had never flung;
She loathed each old familiar thing,—
Her missal with its golden band;
The lute, whose scarcely silent string
Yet trembled with her last command;
The song she sang last night—such song
Would never more to her belong;
Her books, her flowers—o'er all was cast
The bitter presence of the past.

The silken curtains back she drew,
And back the moonlit lattice threw;
In came the soft and fragrant air,—
In came the moonlight soft and fair,—

It soothed her not,—that tranquil sky
Seemed as it said, "despair, and die!"
She gazed upon the lovely night,—
She sickened at its unshared light.
Oh! that a single cloud had thrown
Its shadow sharing with her own.
Ah! loving weakness of the soul,
That asks the wild waves as they roll,—
That asks the light winds as they sweep,—
To share the human tears we weep:
Not all in vain is such a prayer—
They soothe, although they may not share.
But 'twas too soon for the sweet sense
Of Nature's hallowing influence;
Her silent and subduing power
Is felt upon a later hour;

Not on the first dream-haunted mood
Of youth's impassioned solitude.
It was Amenaïde's first sorrow;—
To such there seemeth no to-morrow.

As yet she knew not how such tears
Are half forgot in future years;
How life effaces as it goes
The keenest pang of earlier woes.
How careless and how cold we grow,
Dry as the dust we tread below;
As if the grave its chillness threw,
The grave—which all are hastening to!
But she, the youthful mourner there,
Was bowed beneath her first despair.
The first,—ah! none can ever know
That agony again—

When youth's own force is on the blow,
Its keenness in the pain.

She gazed, although she knew not why,
Where ocean seemed another sky.
The moon looked down upon the deep,
Till in that deep it seemed to be;
Scarce might the eye the image keep
Of which was sky, and which was sea.

But soft! above the glittering tide
Black shadows in their silence glide;
They are not from the heavens above,
They keep the moonlight from the wave;
Slowly the far-off phantoms move,
And bring the darkness of the grave.

They leave the rocky coast that flings
Its gloom above their spreading wings;
They sweep before the rising gale,
The moonlight falls upon the sail;
With swelling canvass, snowy crest,
Like sea-birds in their plumage drest,
The tall ships come, that soon afar
Will bear Leoni to the war.

She watched them on their shining track,—
So looks the wretch upon the rack;
Tho' dews upon her forehead rise,
No tears are in her large wild eyes.
She starts, some strange and sudden thought
The crimson to her cheek has brought;
Her bitten lip is yet more white,
Her blue eye fills with eager light;

Some wish, o'er which she dares not brood,
Has risen on her feverish mood.
Some thoughts there are, that may not brook
Upon their own resolve to look.
The grief which acts is easier borne,
Than that which weeps,—the lone and lorn;
And, urged by love and love's despair,
What is there woman will not dare?

SECOND CANTO.

Oh! fairest of the viewless powers
That guide the fairy fall of night,
The last and loveliest of the hours
That blush away the lingering light.
The twilight, when our earth seems blending
Its human passion with the skies;
And rosy clouds, above ascending,
Wear mortal colours while they rise.
Till, purified, they disappear
Amid the high pale atmosphere.
The twilight melts upon the air,—
But what hath it with earth to do?

Only the spreading sea is there,
With heaven above to close the view.
But yet a passionate emotion
Stirs the warm depths of sky and ocean;
And not a cloud, and not a surge,
But bears a blush upon its verge.

Softly the crimson shadows fall
Around the cabin's tapestried wall;
Where, with the rich light round her dying,
On silken couch the queen is lying;
For, with its proud, yet graceful state,
That ship is worthy of its freight.
Upon her arm Irene bends,
Her long gold hair like light descends;

While the soft shades of evening fling
A richer darkness on each ring.
She looks around, 'tis not to watch
The purple phantasies of eve;
She listens, it is not to catch
The music which the waters weave;
For, with a low, perpetual sound,
The haunted waves are dashing round.
A face is present to her eye,
A voice is ringing in her ear;
Ah! love brings many an object nigh
The heart alone can see and hear.

Her broidery aside is flung,
Aside the small seed pearls she strung;

She will not touch her lute's hush'd chords,
She will not list her maiden's words.
The shadows on her eyelids press
Of Love's delicious idleness.

Amid her train there was a page,
A Moorish youth of tender age
A delicate, pale orphan flung
Too soon the world's rude paths among:
Friendless, save one old harper's care;
Too young to strive, too weak to bear
The many evils that await
The lonely path—the low estate.
Irene's tenderness was moved,
And soon her gentle page she loved.
He was so timid, and so weak;
The tears so soon on his dark cheek,

O'er which the frequent blushes came,
Like night lit up with sudden flame;
And with a voice!—such tones may dwell
Where the wave whispers to the shell,
Half song, half sigh—such music hung
On that young Moor's enchanted tongue.

He sat apart—around his head
Was bound a shawl of deepest red,
Which hid his brow, and gave his eye
A wilder light with its fierce dye;
A foreign lute was in his hand—
Small, dark—his southern sun had tann'd
All colours, those, the soft and frail,
Into an olive, clear and pale.
She marked the lute, and bade him sing
One of those songs so much his own;

Where a sweet sadness woke the string,
Till sorrow's self might claim the tone.
'Tis strange, the happy and the young,
At whose feet life its flowers hath flung —
Whose future like a dream appears,
Yet only ask the lute for tears.
Instinct of sorrow, that prepares
Its sympathy before it shares.

He took his lute—his voice was low
So lapsing waters softly flow
Amid the drooping flowers around,
As if they turned their sighs to sound.
Ah, magic! of a voice that seems
To haunt the soul with hopes and dreams;
Which gives to minstrel words the power
And passion of their early hour,

When in their sweetness first they came,
And turned the heart they filled to flame;—
Such soft, sad voice can give the lay
All that its poet meant to say.

SONG.

Oh! cast that shadow from thy brow,
My dark-eyed love! be glad awhile:
Has Leila's song no music now?
Is there no charm in Leila's smile?

There are young roses in my hair,
And morn and spring are on their bloom;
Yet you have breathed their fragrant air,
Like some cold vapour from the tomb.

There stands the vase of crystal light,
Vein'd with the red wine's crimson stains:
Has the grape lost its spell to-night?
For there the cup, untouch'd, remains.

I took my lute for one sad song;
I sang it, though my heart was wrung—
The sad, sweet notes we've loved so long—
You listened not, though Leila sung.

I pressed my pale, pale cheek to thine;
Though it was wet with many tears,
No pressure came to answer mine,—
No murmur breathed to soothe my fears.

Ah! silent still? then know I all!
I know that we shall part at last!

In mercy, gentle Heaven, recall
Only the memory of the past.

Ah! never did the first June flower
Bare purer bosom to the bee,
Than that which yielded to love's power,
And gave its sweetest wealth to thee.

'Twas a new life—the earth—the sky—
Seemed to grow fairer for thy sake;
But this is gone—oh, destiny!
My heart is withered—let it break!

My garden will lie desolate;
My flowers will die; my birds will pine:
All I once loved I now shall hate;—
With thee changed every thing of mine.

Oh! speak not now—it mocks my heart;
How can hope live when love is o'er?
I only feel that we must part;
I only know—we meet no more!

Never that youthful Moor had lent
The plaining lute o'er which he bent
More sweetness than he gave those chords—
The lady hath not heard the words.
Upon her cheek the rose is bright,
Her eyes are lit with inward light;
Leoni's stately step is near,
What other music can she hear?
Her heart that distant sound has stirr'd,
Ere others but its echo heard.

He comes to say that they can see
The island darkening on the air;
The while their welcome seems to be,
The perfume which these breezes bear—
Breezes that bring from myrtle groves
The memory of their former loves,
When the first poets filled the earth
With dreams which in themselves have birth.
Irene lean'd and watched the isle,
At least she seemed to watch the while;
But the faint smile her rose-lip wore
Was never given to sea or shore.
She looked, but saw not—that soft eye
Had sweeter fancies flitting by.
She felt the look she could not meet,
She dropped beneath Leoni's gaze;

Ah! never words can be so sweet
As silence which itself betrays.
Yes, love has happy hours, which rise
O'er earth as over Paradise.
Hours which o'er life's worst darkness fling
Colours as from an angel's wing,
Which gild the common, soothe the drear,
Bring heaven down to earth's cold sphere;
But never has it such an hour
As in its first unspoken power.
No hue has faded from its bloom,
No light has fallen from its plume—
No after-fear, no common care,
Has weighed on its enchanted air.
Mortality forgets its thrall;
It stands a thing apart from all—

A thing, alas! too soon to be
Numbered amid the things that were,
As morning hues upon the sea
Fade as they never had been there.
But ere those charmed lights depart —
There is no future for the heart.

They leaned upon that vessel's side,
That youthful lady and the knight,
Till one by one from ocean's tide
The stars had risen into light.
She told him of that lovely clime,
She told him of her childhood's time;
Not much the words, but soft and low,
Straight to the heart such accents go;
And all was hushed, as sky and sea
Shared in the sweet tranquillity.

With half a song and half a sigh
The rippling waves went murmuring by.
The loosened sails were lightly stirr'd,
Like wings of some lone forest bird
That cannot sweep from spray to spray,
Nor waken music on its way.
While all around seems spell or sleep,
Why doth that dark page turn and weep?
Ah! never yet was scene so fair,
But some heart watched in its despair.

The ranks are set, the hosts are met,
The morning sunbeams shine
O'er tents with dews of night-fall wet
O'er the long warrior line.
By heaven it is a glorious thing
Upon the gallant steed to spring,

With white plume dancing o'er the crest,
With spur on heel, and spear in rest,
And sword impatient of its light,
A sun that reddens into night.
To feel the energy of strife,
The life that is so much of life,
The pulse's quickened beat—the eye,
Whose dark light kindles to defy.
By heaven it is a glorious pride
To lead the stormy battle tide.
Aye, let the crimson banner spread
So soon to wear a darker red—
Let the proud trumpet wake the air
As victory's sounding wing were there:
It is in death and danger's hour
That most existence feels its power.

And is this all?—the flush and glow—
When war's wild waves at morning flow?
Ah, no! night cometh, and she flings
The weight and darkness of her wings.
The tide has ebbed—the beach is left,
Of its bright panoply bereft;
The glittering waves that caught the sun—
Their light is past, their course is done:
The field is fought—who walketh there?—
The shadow victory casts—Despair!
For the proud chief, in shining mail,
Comes the young orphan mute and pale;
For the red banner's radiant fold,
Some maiden rends her locks of gold;
For the war steed, with bit of foam,
The image of a desolate home.

While wandering o'er the ghastly plain,
Some mother seeks her child in vain.
Ah, War! if bright thy morning's rise,
Dark is thine evening sacrifice.

But for the orphan's sacred cause,
His sword the Count Leoni draws;
And it is for a maiden's right
He leads the thickest of the fight.
It matters not who soonest fled—
Who longest fought—what numbers bled;
Enough, that evening's setting sun
Reddened above a battle won.

Dismounted from his weary steed,
That well had served the struggle's need;
A page the noble creature led,
With panting chest and drooping head.

His master came—in battle stained,
But still his stately step retained.
No more his glittering armour shone—
His helm and glancing plume were gone;
And heat and toil their darkness threw
O'er curls that lost their sunny hue;
The azure scarf which he had worn,
Afar amid the struggle borne;
By all and by himself forgot,
One only marked he wore it not.
The Moorish page! upon his brow
Is seen the only shadow now.

Forth comes the Queen—the first to yield
Due honour to the glorious field,
Which gives the sceptre to her hand,
And, more—gives back her native land.

She came—the purple evening air
Grew as her sweet face shone more fair;
She came—the flowers beneath her feet
Sprang up amid the grass more sweet.
Leoni kneels more graceful far
Than in the morning pomp of war.
Dust—paleness—blood—a charm confer;
Irene felt they were for her.
Such service might the proudest move,
And gratitude excuses love.
With queenly step, but eye that bent
Too conscious on the earth beneath;
Herself she led him to the tent
Where hung the victor's laurel wreath.
Herself unclasped the bands of steel,
Herself unbound the armed heel;

And murmured broken thanks the while,
The soft blush brightening with a smile;
Then bade him rest. Ah, looks like those
Were never heralds of repose.
He slept not; but the dreams that steep
Such sweet unrest are more than sleep.

Night came—the deep and purple time
Of summer in a southern clime.
The curtains of the tent were swayed
As the night wind among them played;
And he could see the distant sky,
Where stars in crowds uncounted lie:
And all seemed bright excepting one;
He fancied he could see it pale,
As if forsaken by its sun,
Its golden light began to fail.

A deeper sympathy there came
For that expiring shadowy flame,
Deserted by its radiant tide,
Than all the brighter stars beside.
And while his fancy worked and brought
Phantoms of many a gloomy thought,
Upon the air a song arose,
An old song with a mournful close:
A song of days far hence removed,
In childhood heard, in childhood loved.
A fitful song it was, and low
And indistinct as waters flow
When sighing leaves and flowers are near,
And yet he held his breath to hear.

SONG.

Take that singing bird away!
It has too glad a lay
For an ear so lorn as mine!
And its wings are all too light,
And its feathers all too bright,
To rest in a bosom like mine!

But bring that bird again
When winter has changed its strain:
Its pining will be sweet to me
When soil and stain are on its breast,
And its pinions droop for rest;—
Oh, then, bring that bird to me!

Together, poor bird, will pine
Over beauty and hope's decline;
Yet I'll envy in pitying thee:
Never may the months restore
The sweet spring they brought before
To me—but they will to thee!

The lute was hushed—but soon again
The singer's voice took up the strain.

One word, although that word may pass
Almost neglected by,
With no more care than what the glass
Bears of a passing sigh:

One word to breathe of love to thee,
One low, one timid word,
To say thou art beloved by me,
But rather felt than heard.

I scarcely wish thy heart were won;
Mine own, with such excess,
Would like the flower beneath the sun
Die with its happiness.

I pray for thee on bended knee,
But not for mine own sake;
My heart's best prayers are all for thee—
It prays itself to break.

Farewell! farewell! I would not leave
A single trace behind;

Why should a thought, if me to grieve,
Be left upon thy mind?

I would not have thy memory dwell
Upon one thought of pain;
And sad it must be the farewell
Of one who loved in vain.

Farewell! thy course is in the sun,
First of the young and brave;
For me,—my race is nearly run,
And its goal is the grave.

There was a sadness in the words,
There was a memory on the chords,

That to the listening warrior brought
Thoughts that he fain would not have thought.
And sudden to his lip there came
A dear, yet half forgotten name;
Forgotten as all else had been
In the sweet eyes of that young queen.
Amenaïde had often sung
The mournful airs on which he hung.
Up sprung the soldier from his rest;
His brow upon his hands he prest.
Oh, misery for the heart to prove
The strife of honour and of love!
Pale was Leoni's cheek next day,
When forth he led his brave array
In triumph through the crowded street,
Where thousands their young sovereign meet,

With loud acclaim and greeting hand,
As if she had not left their land:
Deserted in her hour of need,
With life and death upon her speed.
But now she comes—the fair, the bright,
As if her reign were a delight.
Its path of flowers, its way through song,
Rolls her triumphal car along;
Noble or vassal, each one vies
To catch the sunshine of her eyes:
And yet beneath her silver veil
The maiden's cheek is lovely pale.
Ah, on such gentle cheek is laid
The shadow of a lover's shade!
Her smile had to Leoni flown—
Alas! his answered not her own.

In that bright hour of joy and pride,
Two hearts had bitter thoughts to hide:
So waves fling up their sunlit glow,
While rocks and darkness lurk below.
Oh, weary day that seemed so long!
Oh, hours that dragged their weight along!
At last 'twas night; escaped from all
The crowds that made her splendid thrall,
The young queen sought a garden wild,
Where she had roamed a happy child—
A child that neither hopes nor fears,
Unconscious of its coming years.
She sought a little fountain playing,
With lilies mid its waters straying;
A fairy thing, that sang by night,
And gave the stars again their light.

'Twas somewhat desolate, for wide
The myrtles swept from every side,
And weeds around the margin meet—
But there the very weeds are sweet.

She sat her down, her glittering dress
Contrasting with the dark recess;
The orange buds that clustered there,
Shed their sweet leaves amid her hair;
And to the wave below her face
Lent, like a fairy gift, its grace.
Transient and fair,—e'en now 'tis past,
Some other shadow there is cast.

She started from her mossy seat,
And both stood silent, pale, and still—
Only was heard the heart's loud beat,
Only was heard the plaining rill.

Like statues placed in that lone nook,
To mock it with the human look;
And paint upon the moonlit air
The ghastly aspect of despair!
There was heart-broken silence first,
Then passionate those accents burst,
Whose utter agony of woe,
Once—only once—the heart can know!
She bade him go—for true she read
The beating of that noble heart;
Better it rested with the dead,
Than see its stainless life depart.
She bade him go—although the word
Was scarcely from her pale lip heard—
One desperate prayer, one wild caress,
And she is left in loneliness.

The darkest hours of night were spent
Before Leoni sought his tent;
Then, feverish, down he lay to ask
For sleep, as if sleep were a task;
When, lo! upon his pillow laid,
A letter, fastened by a braid
Of silken hair and golden hue,—
Ah, writing both and hair he knew!

THE LETTER.

A few last words—they are not much
To ask, my early friend, of thee;
My friend—at least thou still art such—
The dearest earth can hold for me.

Once, and once only, let me speak
Of all that I have felt for years;
You read it not upon my cheek,
You dreamed not of it in my tears.

And yet I loved thee with a love
That into every feeling came;
I never looked on heaven above
Without a prayer to bless thy name.

I had no other love to share,
That which was thine—and thine alone;
A few sad thoughts it had to spare
For those beneath the funeral stone.

But every living hope was thine,
Affection with my being grew;

Thy heart was as a home and shrine,
Familiar, and yet sacred too.

How often have I watched the spot
On which thy step had only moved;
My memory remembers not
The hour when thou wert not beloved.

I never had a grief or care
I sought not from thine eyes to hide:
In joy I said, "Ah! would he were
My pleasure sharing at my side."

I bent above each old romance,
And seemed to read thy history there;
I saw, in each brave knight, thy glance
Distinct upon the kindled air.

Whene'er I sang, our songs they seemed
To paint thee only in the lay;
Of only thee at night I dreamed,
Of only thee I thought by day.

The wind that wandered round our towers
Brought echoes of thy voice to me;
Our old hall's solitary hours
Were peopled with sweet thoughts of thee.

And yet we part—this very hour!
Ah!—only if my beating heart
Could break for both—there is no power
Could force me with your love to part.

There is no shape that pain could take,
No ill that would not welcome be,

If suffered but for thy dear sake;
But they must be unshared by thee.

I cannot watch the cold decline
Of love that wastes itself away:
I am too used to warm sunshine,
To bear the moonlight's paler ray.

I am too proud—vain hope to feel
I could not brook thy secret sighs;
I love—how could I bear to read
Reproach or sorrow in thine eyes?

Oh, vain it were that honour kept
Sacred the early vow it made,
Or pity like a phantom wept
O'er the dark urn where love was laid.

Farewell, farewell. I do resign
All hope of love—all early claim;
I only ask that I may pine
Upon the memory of thy name.

Alas! I linger ere I go,
So drowning wretches grasp the wave;
I cannot quite endure to throw
The last cold earth on young Love's grave.

No more; another word would be
A prayer to keep me still thine own.
So long my heart has beat for thee,
How can it beat at once alone?

Farewell,—it is the heart's farewell,—
My summer-shine of love past o'er,

Only the pang of death can tell
That of the words—we meet no more.

He moved not, spoke not, but he grew
More death-like in his pallid hue:
He hid his face, he could not bear
To think of that young heart's despair.
Whate'er his lot, her's must not be
The same in mutual misery.
No, he would seek and bear her home,
And watch o'er every hour to come.
In look or word, she should not guess
His depths of silent wretchedness.
Let her be happy—he would make
His heart the ruin for her sake.
At length he slept—the heavy sleep

Of those who have such vigils kept;
Who comes above his rest to weep,
And watch the warrior as he slept?
A maiden, beautiful and pale,
Shrouded beneath a pilgrim's veil,
Which, backward flowing as she kneels,
A face—an angel's face reveals,
Save that it has a look of care
Which angel-beauty cannot wear.
It was Amenaïde,—she sought,
To see that worshipped face again,
Although its presence only brought
A keener bitterness to pain.
The moorish garb is laid aside,
That sex and loveliness belied,
For she has joined a pilgrim band,
Who journey to the Holy Land.

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To rest each mortal grief and care
Beside the Saviour's sepulchre.
She bent above the sleeper's face,
'Tis the last time her eyes will trace
The features graven in her heart,
With life, life only to depart.
A sad and solemn look she wore,
For hope and passion are no more;
And on her pallid brow appears
The tenderness of prayers and tears;
The quiet of unchanging gloom,
The shadow of an early tomb.

She starts! some other step is near,
A stranger must not find her here;
The heavy curtains round will hide
Her last sad vigil at his side.

The darkness favours her escape,
She holds her breath—a muffled shape
Glides slow and silent through the shade
To where the sleeping chief is laid;
Then listens, but there is no sound,
Then flings a cautious glance around;
Then glitters the assasin brand,
She sees him raise his desperate hand!
She flings herself before the foe,
Too late to ward, she meets the blow.
Wild on the air her death shriek rings,
Leoni from his slumber springs,
And page and guard attendant nigh,
Come hurrying at that fearful cry.
Leoni looks not on his foe,
Only he sees the life-blood flow
Of her it is too late to know.

Gently he bears her to the bed,
Where still his arm supports her head:
A faint smile meets his anxious eye,
She murmurs, "It is sweet to die."
The effort was too much to speak,
Her languid head sinks down more weak;
Her hand relaxes its faint hold,
Her sweet mouth sinks, the white and cold;
The light within her eyes grows dim,
They close—their last look was on him.

DIRGE.

They laid her where earliest flowers were bending,
With lives like her own life, so fair and so frail;
They laid her where showers of sweet leaves were descending,
Like tears when the branches were stirred by the gale.

They laid her where constant the south winds awaken
An echo that dwells in that lone myrtle-grove,
That the place of her rest might be never forsaken
By murmurs of sorrow, and murmurs of love.

They raised the white marble, a shrine for her slumbers,
Whose memories remain, when the summers depart;
There a lute was engraven, and more than its numbers,
The strings that were broken appealed to the heart.

The bride brought her wreath of the orange-flowers hither,
And cast the sweet buds from her tresses of gold;
Like her in their earliest beauty to wither,
Like her in their sunshine of hope to grow cold.

The wild winds and waters together bewailing,
Perpetual mourn'd lamented her doom;
Still sadness amid nature's sounds is prevailing,
Ah! what is all nature but one general tomb?

But vainly the spring's gentle children were dying,
And the tears of the morning amid the long grass,
And vain, vainer still was the human heart's sighing,
That one so beloved, and so lovely, should pass.

The grave is an altar, whereon the heart proffers
Its feverish pleasures, its troubles, its woes;
Stern, silent, and cold, the dark sanctuary proffers
Its gloomy return of unbroken repose.

How much of the sorrow that life may inherit,
That early departure to slumber will save;
The hope that drags onward the world weary spirit,
Rests but when its fever is quenched [redacted]e grave.

Weep not for the dead with a fruitless recalling,
Their soul on the wings of the morning hath fled;

Mourn rather for those whom yet life is enthralling,
Ah! weep for the living—weep not for the dead.

Months passed, and at Leoni's side
The bright Irene stood a bride;
They wore a joy somewhat subdued,
With shadows from another mood:
They gave the young, the lost, the fair,
Tears that the happy well may spare.
Here ends my lay; for what have I
With life's more sunny side to do?
From night I only ask its sigh,
From morn I only ask its dew:
My [redacted] was only made to pine
Upon the weeping cypress-tree;
Its only task and hope, Love mine,
To breathe its mournful songs to thee.

NOTES.

NOTE I.

" For Catherine looked what she had been,
At once the beauty and the queen."

" The new king of Cyprus had been attached from early youth to Catarina, niece of Andréa Cornaro, a Venetian noble, resident on his Cypriote estate; and no sooner was he freed from certain political and domestic obstacles, than he tendered his hand to that lady. In order to satisfy the rigid law which forbade the marriage of any Venetian of noble birth with a foreigner, the destined royal bride was solemnly adopted by the state, and declared a daughter of St. Mark; she was then married by proxy, in the presence of the doge and signory, conducted by the bucentaur to the galley which awaited her in the port, and escorted by a squadron of ships of war, with becoming pomp, and a portion of 100,000 ducats, to the territories of her husband." After his death the island was governed by his widow.

" Fifteen years had now passed during which the signory had governed Cyprus, under the name of Catarina, whose son died not long after his birth; and the islanders, who at first chafed beneath the yoke of the Republic, and earnestly sought

to transfer their allegiance to Naples, had now become accustomed to their virtual masters. There were contingencies, nevertheless, not likely to escape the sagacity of Venice, by which some other hand, after all her long intrigue, might perhaps gather its fruits. Catarina still retained more than ordinary beauty; and her picture, in widow's weeds (even now glowing with almost original freshness among the treasures of the *Palazzo Manfrini*), was one of the earliest great works of Titian, which, both from the skill of the artist and the loveliness of the subject, extended his growing fame beyond the borders of the Lagune. With so great attractions, coupled to the rich dowry of a kingdom, it was not probable that the queen of Cyprus would long remain without suitors; and rumour already declared her to be the intended bride of Frederic, a son of the king of Naples. If she married and bore children, Cyprus would become their inheritance; and to prevent the possibility of such an extinction of their hopes, the Venetian government resolved to assume its sovereignty directly in their own persons. The civilians, therefore, were instructed to avouch the legitimacy of this claim; and they declared, perhaps with less sincerity than solemnity, that the son of Giacopo Lusignano inherited the crown from his father; that since he died a minor, his mother inherited from him; and that finally Venice inherited from his mother, an adopted daughter of St. Mark.

"Giorgio Cornaro, a brother of the queen, was solicited to conduct the ungrateful process of her deposition. To his representations,—that by abandoning the care of a turbulent kingdom, and returning to her native land, in which she might

pass the remainder of her life tranquilly and securely, amongst those bound to her by natural ties, she would far more consult her own happiness than by remaining exposed in a remote and foreign country to the hazards of its ambiguous friendship,—she replied with confidence, that there was little which could allure a woman environed with the splendour of royalty and the observance of a court, to descend to the parsimonious habits and undistinguished level of a republican life; and that it would please her far better if the signory would await her decease before they occupied her possessions. But to arguments explanatory of the will, the power, and the inflexibility of the senate, it was not easy to find an adequate answer; and the *natural eloquence*, as the historian styles it, of her brother ultimately prevailed. 'If such,' she observed, as soon as tears permitted speech, 'be your opinion, such also shall be mine; nevertheless, it is more from you than from myself that our country will obtain a kingdom.' Having thus reluctantly consented, after a few days delay she commenced her progress to Famagosta; royal honours attended her every where as she passed, and on the 6th of February she signed a formal act of abdication in the presence of her council; attended a solemn mass, at which the banner of St. Mark was consecrated; delivered that standard to the charge of the Venetian general; and saw it raised above her own on the towers of the citadel. On the approach of summer she embarked for Venice, where she was received as a crowned head by the doge and signory; and in return for the surrender of her sceptre, she enjoyed a privilege never before or since accorded to any of her countrywomen, a triumphal entry to St. Mark's *Piazzetta*, on the deck

of the Bucentaur. A revenue of 8000 ducats was assigned her for life; and the delights of the 'Paradise' of Asola, in the Trevisan mountains, in which the unqueened queen continued to assemble her little court, have been immortalised by a volume long among the most popular works of early Italian literature; and graced by the poetry, the sentiment, the piety, and the metaphysics of the illustrious historian from whom we have borrowed our narrative of Catarina's dethronement."

NOTE II.

"Divinest Petrarch."

"It was on the 4th of June, that the poet, in company with the Archbishop of Patræ, was enjoying a delicious prospect of the sea from his windows, and cheating a summer evening with familiar talk, when the conversation was interrupted by the appearance of a galley in the offing, fancifully dressed out with green boughs. This unusual decoration, the rapid motion of the oars, the joyful shouts of the mariners, the garlands which they had twined round their caps, the streamers which floated from their masts, all betokened the arrival of some pleasing intelligence. A signal was given from the beacon-tower of the port, and the whole population of the city flocked to the water's edge, breathless with curiosity, to ascertain the news. As the bark came nearer shore, some flags of the enemy were seen hanging from her stern; and all doubt was then removed that she was the messenger of victory. What, however, was the general surprise and joy, when it was an-

nounced that the rebels were not only worsted, but conquered, that Candia was subdued, and that the war was at an end! The doge, with his court and prelates, and the whole attendant crowd of citizens, immediately repaired to St. Mark's and offered up a solemn service of thanksgiving. The festivals which succeeded lasted for many days; and they were closed by a tournament and a magnificent equestrian parade, for which Petrarch is unable to find an adequate Latin name.

In this last spectacle, a troop of four-and-twenty noble Venetian youths, headed by a Ferrarese, splendidly arrayed, and mounted on horses gorgeously caparisoned, started singly, but in quick succession, from a barrier in the *Piazza di San Marco*, and, coursing round to a goal, uninterruptedly renewed the same circle, brandishing lances from which silken ribands fluttered to the wind. The doge, with his brilliant train, sat in the marble gallery over St. Mark's porch, by the well-known horses, whence the evening sun was shaded by richly embroidered canopies. On his right hand sat Petrarch himself, whose love of pleasure was satisfied by two days' attendance on the protracted festivity. The splendour of the scene was heightened by the presence of several English barons, some of them of the royal blood, who at that time were in Venice, so far as we can understand Petrarch's obscure statement, engaged in some maritime negotiation; though one of the chroniclers assures us that they had no other object than a laudable desire of seeing the world. In the court below not a grain of sand could have fallen to the pavement, so dense was the throng. A wooden scaffolding, raised for the occasion, on the right of the piazza, contained a bright store of beauty;

the forty noblest dames of Venice, glittering with costly jewels. In the horse-course, honour was the sole prize; but, for the tournament, in which danger was to be encountered, more substantial rewards were proposed. For the most successful champion, a crown of solid gold, chased with precious stones; for the second, a silver belt, of choice workmanship.

CLASSICAL SKETCHES.

SAPPHO.

- - - - She was one
Whose lyre the spirit of sweet song had hung
With myrtle and with laurel; on whose head
Genius had shed his starry glories - - -
" - - - transcripts of woman's loving heart
And woman's disappointment." - - - -

She leant upon her harp, and thousands looked
On her in love and wonder—thousands knelt
And worshipp'd in her presence—burning tears,
And words that died in utterance, and a pause
Of breathless, agitated eagerness,
First gave the full heart's homage: then came forth

A shout that rose to heaven; and the hills,
The distant valleys, all rang with the name
Of the Æolian Sappho—every heart
Found in itself some echo to her song.
Low notes of love—hopes beautiful and fresh,
And some gone by for ever—glorious dreams,
High aspirations, those thrice gentle thoughts
That dwell upon the absent and the dead,
Were breathing in her music—and these are
Chords every bosom vibrates to. But she
Upon whose brow the laurel crown is placed,
Her colour's varying with deep emotion—
There is a softer blush than conscious pride
Upon her cheek, and in that tremulous smile
Is all a woman's timid tenderness:
Her eye is on a Youth, and other days

And young warm feelings have rushed on her soul
With all their former influence,—thoughts that slept
Cold, calm as death, have wakened to new life—
Whole years' existence have passed in that glance...
She had once loved in very early days:
That was a thing gone by: one had called forth
The music of her soul: he loved her too,
But not as she did—she was unto him
As a young bird, whose early flight he trained,
Whose first wild song were sweet, for he had taught
Those songs—but she looked up to him with all
Youth's deep and passionate idolatry:
Love was her heart's sole universe—he was
To her, Hope, Genius, Energy, the God,
Her inmost spirit worshipped—in whose smile
Was all e'en minstrel pride held precious; praise
Was prized but as the echo of his own.

But other times and other feelings came:
Hope is love's element, and love with her
Sickened of its own vanity . . . . She lived
Mid bright realities and brighter dreams,
Those strange but exquisite imaginings
That tinge with such sweet colours minstrel thoughts;
And fame, like sunlight, was upon her path;
And strangers heard her name, and eyes that never
Had looked on Sappho, yet had wept with her.
Her first love never wholly lost its power,
But, like rich incense shed, although no trace
Was of its visible presence, yet its sweetness
Mingled with every feeling, and it gave
That soft and melancholy tenderness
Which was the magic of her song . . . . That Youth
Who knelt before her was so like the shape
That haunted her spring dreams—the same dark eyes,

Whose light had once been as the light of heaven!—
Others breathed winning flatteries—she turned
A careless hearing—but when Phaon spoke,
Her heart beat quicker, and the crimson light
Upon her cheek gave a most tender answer....
She loved with all the ardour of a heart
Which lives but in itself: her life had passed
Amid the great creations of the mind:
Love was to her a vision—it was now
Heightened into devotion.... But a soul
So gifted and so passionate as her's
Will seek companionship in vain, and find
Its feelings solitary.... Phaon soon
Forgot the fondness of his Lesbian maid;
And Sappho knew that genius, riches, fame,
May not soothe slighted love. - - - -

- - - There is a dark rock looks on the blue sea;
'Twas there love's last song echoed—there She sleeps,
Whose lyre was crowned with laurel, and whose name
Will be remembered long as Love or Song
Are sacred—the devoted Sappho!

BACCHUS AND ARIADNE.

LEONARDI. 'Tis finished now: look on my picture, Love!

ALVINE. Oh, that sweet ring of graceful figures! one

Flings her white arms on high, and gaily strikes
Her golden cymbals—I can almost deem
I hear their beatings; one with glancing feet
Follows her music, while her crimson cheek
Is flushed with exercise, till the red grape
'Mid the dark tresses of a sister nymph,
Is scarcely brighter: there another stands,
A darker spirit yet, with joyous brow,

And holding a rich goblet: oh, that child!
With eyes as blue as spring-days, and those curls
Throwing their auburn shadow o'er a brow
So arch, so playful—have you bodied forth
Young Cupid in your colours?

LEONARDI. No—oh no,
I could not paint Love as a careless boy,—
That passionate Divinity, whose life
Is of such deep and intense feeling! No,
I am too true, too earnest, and too happy,
To ever image by a changeful child
That which is so unchangeable. But mark
How sweet, how pale, the light that I have thrown
Over the picture: it is just the time
When Dian's dewy kiss lights up the dreams
That make Endymion's sleep so beautiful.

Look on the calm blue sky, so set with stars:
Is it not like to what we both recall?
Those azure shadows of a summer night,
That veiled the cautious lutanist who waked
Thy slumbers with his song. How more than fair,
How like a spirit of that starry hour,
I used to think you, as your timid hand
Unbarr'd the casement, and you leant to hear,
Your long hair floating loose amid the vines
Around your lattice; and how very sweet
Your voice, scarce audible, with the soft fear
That mingled in its low and tender tones!

ALVINE. Nay, now I will not listen to the tales
Our memory is so rich in. I have much
For question here. Who is this glorious shape,
That, placed on a bright chariot in the midst,

Stands radiant in his youth and loveliness?
Around his sunny locks there is a wreath
Of the green vine leaves, and his ivory brow
Shines out like marble, when a golden ray
Of summer light is on it, and his step
Scarce seems to touch his pard-drawn car, but floats
Buoyant upon the air;—and who is she
On whom his ardent gaze is turned? So pale,—
Her dark hair gathered round her like a shroud,
Yet far more lovely than the sparkling nymphs
Dancing around that chariot. Yet how sweet,
Though dimmed with tears, those deep blue eyes,
Half turned and half averted timidly
From the youth's lightning glance. Oh tell me now
One of those legends that I love so well:
Has not this picture some old history?

LEONARDI. 'Tis one of those bright fictions that have made
The name of Greece only another word
For love and poetry; with a green earth—
Groves of the graceful myrtle—summer skies,
Whose stars are mirror'd in ten thousand streams—
Winds that move but in perfume and in music,
And, more than all, the gift of woman's beauty.
What marvel that the earth, the sky, the sea,
Were filled with all those fine imaginings
That love creates, and that the lyre preserves!

ALVINE. But for the history of that pale girl
Who stands so desolate on the sea shore?

LEONARDI. She was the daughter of a Cretan king—
A tyrant. Hidden in the dark recess

Of a wide labyrinth, a monster dwelt,
And every year was human tribute paid
By the Athenians. They had bowed in war;
And every spring the flowers of all the city,
Young maids in their first beauty—stately youths,
Were sacrificed to the fierce King! They died
In the unfathomable den of want,
Or served the Minotaur for food. At length
There came a royal Youth, who vowed to slay
The monster or to perish!—Look, Alviné,
That statue is young Theseus.

ALVINE. Glorious!
How like a god he stands, one haughty hand
Raised in defiance! I have often looked
Upon the marble, wondering it could give
Such truth to life and majesty.

LEONARDI. You will not marvel Ariadne loved.
She gave the secret clue that led him safe
Through all the labyrinth, and she fled with him.

ALVINE. Ah, now I know your tale: he proved untrue.
This ever has been woman's fate,—to love,
To know one summer day of happiness,
And then to be most wretched!

LEONARDI. She was left
By her so heartless lover while she slept.
She woke from pleasant dreams—she dreamt of him—
Love's power is felt in slumber—woke, and found
Herself deserted on the lonely shore!
The bark of the false Theseus was a speck
Scarce seen upon the waters, less and less,
Like hope diminishing, till wholly past.

I will not say, for you can fancy well,
Her desolate feelings as she roamed the beach,
Hurled from the highest heaven of happy love!
But evening crimsoned the blue sea—a sound
Of music and of mirth came on the wind,
And radiant shapes and laughing nymphs danced by,
And he, the Theban God, looked on the maid,
And looked and loved, and was beloved again.
This is the moment that the picture gives:
He has just flung her starry crown on high,
And bade it there a long memorial shine
How a god loved a mortal. He is springing
From out his golden car—another bound—
Bacchus is by his Ariadne's side!

ALVINE. She loved again! Oh cold inconstancy!
This is not woman's love; her love should be

A feeling pure and holy as the flame
The vestal virgin kindles, fresh as flowers
The spring has but just coloured, innocent
As the young dove, and changeless as the faith
The martyr seals in blood. 'Tis beautiful
This picture, but it wakes no sympathy.

LEONARDI. Next time, Alvine, my pencil shall but give
Existence to the memory of love's truth.

ALVINE. Do you recall a tale you told me once,
Of the forsaken Nymph that Paris left
For new love and ambition; at his death
He bade them bear him to Enone's arms?
She never had forgotten him: her heart,
Which beat so faithfully, became his pillow;
She closed his eyes, and pardoned him and died!

LEONARDI. Love, yes; I'll paint their meeting: the wan youth,
Dying, but yet so happy in forgiveness;
The sweet Enone, with her gentle tears,
Filled with meek tenderness, her pensive brow
Arching so gracefully, with deep blue eyes
Half hidden by the shadowy lash—a look
So patient, yet so fraught with tenderest feeling,
Like to an idol placed upon the shrine
Of faith, for all to worship. She shall be,
Saving thine own inimitable smile,
In all like thee, Alvine!

UNKNOWN FEMALE HEAD.

I KNOW not of thy history, thou sad
Yet beautiful faced Girl:—the chestnut braid
Bound darkly round thy forehead, the blue veins
Wandering in azure light, the ivory chin
Dimpled so archly, have no characters
Graven by memory; but thy pale cheek,
Like a white rose on which the sun hath looked
Too wildly warm, (is not this passion's legend?)
The drooping lid whose lash is bright with tears,
A lip which has the sweetness of a smile
But not its gaiety—do not these bear
The scorched footprints sorrow leaves in passing

O'er the clear brow of youth?—It may but be
An idle thought, but I have dreamed thou wert
A captive in thy hopelessness: afar
From the sweet home of thy young infancy,
Whose image unto thee is as a dream
Of fire and slaughter, I can see thee wasting,
Sick for thy native air, loathing the light
And cheerfulness of men; thyself the last
Of all thy house, a stranger and a slave!

LEANDER AND HERO.

It is a tale that many songs have told,
And old, if tale of love can e'er be old;
Yet dear to me this lingering o'er the fate
Of two so young, so true, so passionate!
And thou, the idol of my harp, the soul
Of poetry, to me my hope, my whole
Happiness of existence, there will be
Some gentlest tones that I have caught from thee!
Will not each heart-pulse vibrate, as I tell
Of faith even unto death unchangeable!
Leander and his Hero! they should be,
When youthful lovers talk of constancy,
Invoked. Oh, for one breath of softest song,
Such as on summer evenings floats along,

To murmur low their history! every word
That whispers of them, should be like those heard
At moonlight casements, when th' awakened maid
Sighs her soft answer to the serenade.
She stood beside the altar, like the queen,
The bright-eyed queen that she was worshipping.
Her hair was bound with roses, which did fling
A perfume round, for she that morn had been
To gather roses, that were clustering now
Amid the shadowy curls upon her brow.
One of the loveliest daughters of that land,
Divinest Greece! that taught the painter's hand
To give eternity to loveliness;
One of those dark-eyed maids, to whom belong
The glory and the beauty of each song
Thy poets breathed, for it was theirs to bless

With life the pencil and the lyra's dreams,
Giving reality to visioned gleams
Of bright divinities. Amid the crowd
That in the presence of young Hero bowed,
Was one who knelt with fond idolatry,
As if in homage to some deity,
Gazing upon her as each gaze he took
Must be the very last—that intense look
That none but lovers give, when they would trace
On their heart's tablets some adored face.
The radiant priestess from the temple past:
Yet there Leander staid, to catch the last
Wave of her fragrant hair, the last low fall
Of her white feet, so light and musical;
And then he wandered silent to a grove,
To feed upon the full heart's ecstasy.

The moon was sailing o'er the deep blue sky,
Each moment shedding fuller light above,
As the pale crimson from the west departs.
Ah, this is just the hour for passionate hearts
To linger over dreams of happiness,
All of young love's delicious loveliness!
The cypress waved upon the evening air
Like the long tresses of a beauty's hair;
And close beside was laurel; and the pale
Snow blossoms of the myrtle tree, so frail
And delicate, like woman; 'mid the shade
Rose the white pillars of the colonnade
Around the marble temple, where the Queen
Of Love was worshipped, and there was seen,
Where the grove ended, the so glorious sea
Now in its azure sleep's tranquillity.

He saw a white veil wave,—his heart beat high:
He heard a voice, and then a low toned sigh.
Gently he stole amid the shading trees—
It is his love—his Hero that he sees!
Her hand lay motionless upon the lute,
Which thrilled beneath the touch, her lip was mute,
Only her eyes were speaking; dew and light
There blended like the hyacinth, when night
Has wept upon its bosom; she did seem
As consciousness were lost in some sweet dream—
That dream was love! Blushes were on her cheek,
And what, save love, do blushes ever speak?
Her lips were parted, as one moment more,
And then the heart would yield its hidden store.
'Twas so at length her thought found utterance:
Light, feeling, flashed from her awakened glance—

She paused—then gazed on one pale star above,
Poured to her lute the burning words of love!
Leander heard his name! How more than sweet
That moment, as he knelt at Hero's feet,
Breathing his passion in each thrilling word,
Only by lovers said, by lovers heard.

That night they parted—but they met again;
The blue sea rolled between them—but in vain!
Leander had no fear—he cleft the wave—
What is the peril fond hearts will not brave!
Delicious were their moonlight wanderings,
Delicious were the kind and gentle things
Each to the other breathed; a starry sky,
Music and flowers,—this is love's luxury:
The measure of its happiness is full,
When all round shares its own enchanted lull.

There were sweet birds to count the hours, and roses,
Like those which on a blushing cheek reposes;
Violets fresh as violets could be;
Stars overhead, with each a history
Of love told by its light; and waving trees,
And perfumed breathings upon every breeze:
These were beside them when they met. And day,
Though each was from the other far away,
Had still its pleasant memories; they might
Think what they had forgotten the last night,
And make the tender thing they had to say
More warm and welcome from its short delay.
And then their love was secret,—oh, it is
Most exquisite to have a fount of bliss
Sacred to us alone, no other eye
Conscious of our enchanted mystery,

Ourselves the sole possessors of a spell
Giving us happiness unutterable!
I would compare this secrecy and shade
To that fair island, whither Love conveyed
His Psyche, where she lived remote from all:
Life one long, lone, and lovely festival;
But when the charm, concealment's charm, was known,
Oh then good by to love, for love was flown!
Love's wings are all too delicate to bear
The open gaze, the common sun and air.
There have been roses round my lute; but now
I must forsake them for the cypress bough.
Now is my tale of tears:—One night the sky,
As if with passion darkened angrily,

And gusts of wind swept o'er the troubled main
Like hasty threats, and then were calm again:
That night young Hero by her beacon kept
Her silent watch, and blamed the night, and wept,
And scarcely dared to look upon the sky:
Yet lulling still her fond anxiety —
With, "Surely in such a storm he cannot brave,
If but for my sake only, wind and wave."
At length Aurora led young Day and blushed,
In her sweet presence sea and sky were hushed;
What is there beauty cannot charm? her power
Is felt alike, in storm and sunshine hour;
And light and soft the breeze which waved the veil
Of Hero, as she wandered, lone and pale,
Her heart sick with its terror, and her eye
Roving in tearful, dim uncertainty.

Not long uncertain,—she marked something glide,
Shadowy and indistinct, upon the tide—
On rushed she in that desperate energy,
Which only has to know, and, knowing, die—
It was Leander!

HEAD OF ARIADNE.

Oh, why should Woman ever love,
Throwing her chance away,
Her little chance of summer shine,
Upon a rainbow ray?

Look back on each old history,
Each fresh remembered tale;
They'll tell how often love has made
The cheek of woman pale;—

Her unrequited love, a flower
Dying for air and light;

Her love betrayed, another flower
Withering before a blight.

Look down within the silent grave;
How much of breath and bloom
Have wasted,—passion's sacrifice
Offered to the lone tomb.

Look on her hour of solitude,
How many bitter cares
Belie the smile with which the lip
Would sun the wound it bears.

Mark this sweet face! oh, never blush
Has past o'er one more fair,
And never o'er a brighter brow
Has wandered raven hair.

And mark how carelessly those wreaths
Of curl are flung behind,
And mark how pensively the brow
Leans on the hand reclined.

'Tis she of Crete!—another proof
Of woman's weary lot;
Their April doom of sun and shower,—
To love, then be forgot.

Heart-sickness, feelings tortured, torn,
A sky of storm above,
A path of thorns,—these are love's gifts,—
Ah, why must woman love!

A NEREID FLOATING ON A SHELL.

Thy dwelling is the coral cave,
Thy element the blue sea wave,
Thy music the wild billows dashing,
Thy light the diamond's crystal flashing:
I'd leave this earth to dwell with thee,
Bright-haired daughter of the sea!
It was an hour of lone starlight
When first my eye caught thy sweet sight:
Thy white feet press'd a silver shell,
Love's own enchanted coracle;
Thy fair arms waved like the white foam
The seas dash from their billowy home;

And far behind, thy golden hair,
A bright sail, floated on the air;
And on thy lips there was a song,
As music wafted thee along.
They say, sweet daughter of the sea,
Thy look and song are treachery;
Thy smile is but the honied bait
To lure thy lover to his fate.
I know not, and I care still less;
It is enough of happiness
To be deceived. Oh, never yet
Could love doubt—no, one doubt would set
His fettered pinions free from all
His false but most delicious thrall.
Love cannot live and doubt; and I,
Vowed slave to my bright deity,

Have but one prayer: Come joy, come ill,
If you deceive, deceive me still;
Better the heart in faith should die
Than break beneath love's perjury.

THE THESSALIAN FOUNTAIN.

Gleamings of poetry,—if I may give
That name of beauty, passion, and of grace,
To the wild thoughts that in a starlit hour,
In a pale twilight, or a rose-bud morn,
Glance o'er my spirit—thoughts that are like light,
Or love, or hope, in their effects.

A SMALL clear fountain, with green willow trees
Girdling it round, there is one single spot
Where you may sit and rest, its only bank;
Elsewhere the willows grow so thick together:
And it were like a sin to crush that bed
Of pale and delicate narcissus flowers,
Bending so languidly, as still they found
In the pure wave a love and destiny;

But here the moss is soft, and when the wind
Has been felt even through the forest screen,—
For round, like guardians to the willows, stand
Oaks large and old, tall firs, dark beach, and elms
Rich with the yellow wealth that April brings,—
A shower of rose-leaves makes it like a bed
Whereon a nymph might sleep, when, with her arm
Shining like snow amid her raven hair,
She dreamt of the sweet song wherewith the faun
Had lulled her, and awakening from her rest
When through the leaves an amorous sunbeam stole
And kissed her eyes; the fountain were a bath
For her to lave her ivory feet, and cool
The crimson beauty of her sleep-warm cheek,
And bind her ruffled curls in the blue mirror
Of the transparent waters. But these days

Of visible poetry have long been past!—
No fear that the young hunter may profane
The haunt of some immortal; but there still—
For the heart clings to old idolatry,
If not with true belief, with tenderness,—
Lingers a spirit in the woods and flowers
Which have a Grecian memory,—some tale
Of olden love or grief linked with their bloom,
Seem beautiful beyond all other ones.
The marble pillars are laid in the dust,
The golden shrine and its perfume are gone;
But there are natural temples still for those
Eternal though dethroned Deities,
Where from green altars flowers send up their incense:
This fount is one of them!---

AN OLD MAN OVER THE BODY OF HIS SON.

I am too proud by far to weep,
Though earth had nought so dear
As was the Soldier Youth to me
Now sleeping on that bier.
It were a stain upon his fame
Would do his laurel crown a shame,
To shed one single tear.
It was a blessed lot to die
In battle, and for liberty!

He was my first, my only child,
And when my race was run,
I was so proud to send him forth
To do as I had done.

It was his last, his only field:
They brought him back upon his shield,
  But victory was won.
I cannot weep when I recall
Thy land has cause to bless thy fall.

When others tell their children all
  The fame that warriors win,
I must sit silent, and but think
  On what my child had been.
It is a father's joy to see
The young eyes glow exultingly
  When warlike tales begin;
And yet I know no living one
I would change for my sleeping Son.

L'AMORE DOMINATORE.

They built a temple for the God,
'Twas in a myrtle grove,
Where the bee and the butterfly
Vied for each blossom's love.

The marble pillars rose like snow,
Glittering in the sunshine:
A thousand roses shed their breath,
Like incense, o'er the shrine.

And there were censers of perfume,
Vases with their sweet showers,

And wreaths of every blended hue
That lights the summer flowers.

And, like the breathing of those flowers
Made audible, a sound
Came, lulling as a waterfall,
From lutes and voices 'round.

I looked upon the altar,—there
The pictured semblance lay
Of him the temple's lord; it shone
More beautiful than day.

It was a sleeping child, as fair
As the first-born of spring;
Like Indian gold waved the bright curls
In many a sunny ring.

His cheek was flushed with its own rose,
And with the crimson shed
From the rich wings that like a cloud
Were o'er his slumbers spread.

And by him lay his feathered shafts,
His golden bow unbent;—
Methought that, even in his sleep,
His smile was on them sent.

I heard them hymn his name—his power,—
I heard them, and I smiled;
How could they say the earth was ruled
By but a sleeping child?

I went then forth into the world
To see what might be there;

And there I heard a voice of wo,
Of weeping, and despair.

I saw a youthful warrior stand
In his first light of fame,—
His native city filled the air
With her deliverer's name.

I saw him hurry from the crowd,
And fling his laurel crown,
In weariness, in hopelessness,
In utter misery, down.

And what the sorrow, then I asked,
Can thus the warrior move
To scorn his meed of victory?
They told me it was Love.

I sought the forum, there was one
With dark and haughty brow,—
His voice was as the trumpet's tone,
Mine ear rings with it now.

They quailed before his flashing eye,—
They watched his lightest word,—
When suddenly that eye was dim,
That voice no longer heard.

I looked upon his lonely hour,
The weary solitude;
When over dark and bitter thoughts
The sick heart's left to brood.

I marked the haughty spirit's strife
To rend its bonds in vain:

Again I asked the cause of ill,
And heard Love's name again.

Yet on I went: I thought that Love
To woman's gentle heart,
Perhaps, had flung a lighter shaft,
Had given a fairer part.

I looked upon a lovely face,
Lit by a large dark eye;
But on the lash there was a tear,
And on the lip a sigh.

I asked not why that form had drooped,
Nor why that cheek was pale?

I heard the maiden's twilight song,
It told me all her tale.

I saw an urn, and round it hung
An April diadem
Of flowers, telling they mourned one
Faded and fair like them.

I turned to tales of other days,
They spoke of breath and bloom;
And proud hearts that were bow'd by Love
Into an early tomb.

I heard of every suffering
That on this earth can be:
How can they call a sleeping child
A likeness, Love, of thee?

They cannot paint thee: — let them dream
A dark and nameless thing.
Why give the likeness of the dove
Where is the serpent's sting?

A

SERIES OF TALES.

THE CASTILIAN NUPTIALS.

And days fled by,
A cloud came o'er my destiny,
The dream of passion soon was past,
A summer's day may never last—
Yes, every feeling then knew change,
One only hope was left—revenge!
He wedded with another—tears
Are very vain, and as for fears
I know them not—I deeply swore
No lip should sigh where mine before
Had sealed its vow, no heart should rest
Upon the bosom mine had prest.
Life had no ill I would not brave
To claim him, even in the grave!

FAIR is the form that in yon orange bower,

Like a lone spirit, bends beside the lamp,

Whose silver light is flung o'er clustering rose,
And myrtle with pearl buds and emerald leaves.
Green moss and azure violets have formed
The floor, and fragrant bloom the canopy,
And perfumed shrubs the pillars, round whose stems
The vine has crept, and mixed its purple fruit
Amid the rich-hued blossoms. Citron trees,
And beds of hyacinths, have sent their sweets
Upon the odorous dew of the night gale,
Which, playing with the trembling lamp, flings round
A changeful light—now glancing on the flowers,
And brightening every hue—now lost in shade.
Look out upon the night! There is no star
In beauty visible—the Moon is still
Sojourning in her shadowy hall—the clouds
Are thickening round; but though the tempest's wing

Will herald in the morning, all is still,
And calm, and soothing now,—no rougher sounds
Than the low murmur of the mountain rill,
And the sweet music of the nightingale,
Are on the air. But a far darker storm,
The tempest of the heart, the evil war
Of fiery passions, is fast gathering
O'er that bright creature's head, whose fairy bower
And fairy shape breathe but of happiness.
She is most beautiful! The richest tint
That e'er with roselight dyed a summer cloud,
Were pale beside her cheek; her raven hair
Falls even to her feet, though fastened up
In many a curl and braid with bands of pearl;
And that white bosom and those rounded arms
Are perfect as a statue's, when the skill

Of some fine touch has moulded it to beauty.
Yet there are tears within those radiant eyes,
And that fair brow is troubled! She is young;
But her heart's youth is gone, and innocence,
And peace, and soft and gentle thoughts, have fled
A breast, the sanctuary of unhallowed fires,
That love has led to guilt. At each light stir
Of but a waving branch, a falling leaf,
A deeper crimson burnt upon her cheek,
Each pulse beat eagerly, for every sound
To her was Fernand's sept, and then she sank
Pallid and tearful, with that sickening throb
Of sadness only love and fear can know.
The night pass'd on—she touched the silver chords,
And answered with her voice her lone guitar.
It pleased her for a while:—it soothes the soul

To pour its thoughts in melancholy words;
And if aught can charm sorrow, music can.
The song she chose was one her youth had loved,
Ere yet she knew the bitterness of grief,
But thought tears luxury :—

Oh take that starry wreath away,
Fling not those roses o'er my lute !
The brow that thou wouldst crown is pale,
The chords thou wouldst awaken mute.

Look on those broken gems that lie
Beside those flowers, withering there;
Those leaves were blooming round my lute,
Those gems were bright amid my hair.

And they may be a sign to tell
Of all the ruin love will make:
He comes in beauty, and then leaves
The hope to fade, the heart to break!

The song died in low sobs. "I ever felt
That it would come to this,—that I should be
Forsaken and forgotten! I would give
Life, more than life, those precious memories
Of happiness and Fernand! I'd forget
That I have been beloved, all I have known
Of rapture, all the dreams that long have been
My sole existence, but to feel again
As I felt ere I loved—ere I had given
My every hope as passion's sacrifice."
Her face was hidden in her hands; but tears
Trickled through her slight fingers—tears, those late

Vain tributes to remorse! At length she rose,
And paced with eager steps her scented bower,
Then trimmed her lamp, and gathered flowers and leaves,
Twined them in wreaths, and placed them gracefully;
Then felt the vanity of all her care,
And scattered them around. The morning broke,
And hastily she left the shade, to hide
From all her anxious heart—her misery!
That day she knew her fate—heard that Fernand
Was now betrothed to the high-born Blanche.
Hermione wept not, although her heart
Swelled nigh to bursting; but she hid her thoughts.
Next morning she was gone! - - - - -
The palace was all lustre, like a dome,
A fairy dome; the roofs were all one blaze

With lamp and chandelier; the mirrors shone
Like streams of light, and, waving gracefully,
The purple draperies hung festooned with wreaths,
That shed their incense round. Hall after hall
Opened in some new splendour. Proud the feast
The Duke to-night gives for his peerless child,
And Castile's noblest are all met to greet
Blanche and her gallant lover: princely forms,
And ladies beautiful, whose footsteps fell
Soft as the music which they echoed; light,
And melody, and perfume, and sweet shapes,
Mingled together like a glorious dream.—
Hermione is there! She has forsaken
Her woman's garb, her long dark tresses float
Like weeds upon the Tagus, and no one
Can in that pale and melancholy boy

Recall the lovely woman. All in vain
She looked for him she sought; but when one pass'd
With raven hair and tall, her heart beat high—
Then sank again, when her impatient glance
Fell on a stranger's face. At length she reached
A stately room, richer than all the rest,
For there were loveliest things, though not of life:
Canvass, to which the painter's soul had given
A heaven of beauty; and statues, which were touched
With art so exquisite, the marble seemed
Animate with emotion. It is strange,
Amid its deepest feelings, how the soul
Will cling to outward images, as thus
It could forget its sickness! There she gazed,
And envied the sad smile, the patient look,
Of a pale Magdalen: it told of grief,

But grief long since subdued. Half curtained round
By vases filled with fragrant shrubs, were shapes
Of Grecian deities and nymphs. She drew
Sad parallels with her of Crete, who wept
O'er her Athenian lover's perjury.
She left the hall of paintings, and pursued
A corridor which opened to the air,
And entered in the garden: there awhile,
Beneath the shadow of a cypress tree,
She breathed the cooling gale. Amid the shade
Of those bright groves were ladies lingering,
Who listened to most gentle things, and then
Blushed like the roses near them; and light groups
Of gladsome dancers, gliding o'er the turf,
Like elfin revelling by the moonlight.
She looked up to the lovely face of heaven:—

It was unclouded, and the rolling moon
Pass'd o'er the deep blue sky like happiness,
Leaving a trace of light. She gazed around,—
There was no gloom but that within her heart.
Ah, this is very loneliness to feel
So wholly destitute, without one thing
That has a portion in our wretchedness!

Then two came by—that voice to her was death—
It was her false Fernand's! A lovely girl
Hung on his arm, so soft, so delicate,
It seemed a breath might sweep her from the earth;
And Fernand bent with so much tenderness
To catch the music of the timid voice,
Which dared not breathe its love-vow audibly.
Hermione rushed thence, as if her step

Had been upon the serpent's lair. That night
She brooded o'er her wrongs, and bitterly
Prayed for revenge! - - - And this is Woman's fate:
All her affections are called into life
By winning flatteries, and then thrown back
Upon themselves to perish, and her heart,
Her trusting heart, filled with weak tenderness,
Is left to bleed or break! - - - -
The marriage feast was spread, the guests were round,
The halls were filled with mirth, and light, and song.
High o'er the rest the youthful pair were placed,
Beneath a canopy of fretted gold
And royal purple. With a shout they drank
Health and long blessedness to the fair bride!
And Fernand called for wine, to pledge them back
His thanks. A slender Page approached, and held
The golden cup; - - - There is a marble look

In the dark countenance of that pale boy
Ill suiting one so youthful. Fernand drained
The liquor to the dregs; yet, while he drank
He felt the eagle-glance of that strange Page
Fix on him like a spell. With a wild laugh
Of fearless taunting, he took back the cup—
That laugh rang like a demon's curse! The sounds
Of revelry one moment paused—they heard
Muttered the words—'Vengeance!' 'Hermione!'
Blanche broke the silence by her shriek—Fernand
Had fallen from his seat, his face was black
With inward agony—that draught bore fate!
That Page had poisoned him!—In dread they turned
To where the murderer was: she had not moved,
But stood with fixed eyes; the clouds of death
Were on her face—she too had pledged the cup!

THE LOVER'S ROCK.

Oh why should Fate such pleasure have,
Life's dearest bands untwining;
Or why so sweet a flower as love
Depend on Fortune's shining?
This world's wealth, when I think upon't,
Is pride and a' the lave on't;
Fie, fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave on't."—BURNS.

Most beautiful, most happy! must there be
Clouds on thy sky, and thorns upon thy path?
Love, why art thou so wretched? thou, so formed
To be the blessedness of life, the last
Sweet relic left of Eden! Yet on thee,
Even on thee, the curse is laid! Thy cup
Has its full share of bitterness. The heart

Is chilled, crushed, and constrained by the cold world,
Outraged and undervalued; the fine throbs
Of feeling turn to ministers of grief;
All is so false around, affection's self
Becomes suspected. But of all drear lots
That love must draw from the dark urn of fate,
There is one deepest misery—when two hearts,
Born for each other, yet must beat apart.
Aye, this is misery, to check, conceal
That which should be our happiness and glory;
To love, to be beloved again, and know
A gulf between us:—aye, 'tis misery!
This agony of passion, this wild faith,
Whose constancy is fruitless, yet is kept
Inviolate:—to feel that all life's hope,

And light, and treasure, clings to one from whom
Our wayward doom divides us. Better far
To weep o'er treachery or broken vows,—
For time may teach their worthlessness:—or pine
With unrequited love;—there is a pride
In the fond sacrifice—the cheek may lose
Its summer crimson; but at least the rose
Has withered secretly—at least, the heart
That has been victim to its tenderness,
Has sighed unechoed by some one as true,
As wretched as itself. But to be loved
With feelings deep, eternal as our own,
And yet to know that we must quell those feelings
With phantom shapes of prudence, worldly care—
For two who live but in each other's life,
Whose only star in this dark world is love!

Alas, that circumstance has power to part
The destiny of true lovers!
Yonder rock
Has a wild legend of untoward love,
Fond, faithful, and unhappy! There it stands
By the blue Guadalquivir; the green vines
Are like a girdle round the granite pillars
Of its bare crags, and its dark shadow falls
Over an ancient castle at the base.
Its Lord had a fair Daughter, his sole child,—
Her picture is in the old gallery still;
The frame is shattered, but the lovely face
Looks out in all its beauty; 'tis a brow
Fresh, radiant as the spring,—a pencilled arch,
One soft dark shadow upon mountain snow.
A small white hand flings back the raven curls

From off the blue-veined temples; on her cheek
There is a colour like the moss-rose bud
When first it opens, ere the sun and wind
Have kissed away its delicate slight blush.
And such a fairy shape, as those fine moulds
Of ancient Greece, whose perfect grace has given
Eternity to beauty. She was loved!
And the wild songs that tell how she was loved
Yet haunt their native valley. He was one
Who had each great and glorious gift, save gold;
Music was ever round his steps:—to him
There was deep happiness in nature's wild
And rich luxuriance, and he had the pride,
The buoyant hope, that genius ever feels
In dreaming of the path that it will carve
To immortality. A sweeter dream

Soon filled the young Leandro's heart: he loved,
And all around grew Paradise,—Inez
Became to him existence, and her heart
Soon yielded to his gentle constancy.

They had roamed forth together: the bright dew
Was on the flowers that he knelt and gave,
Sweet tribute to his idol. A dark brow
Was bent upon them—'tis her father's brow!
And Inez flung her on his neck and wept.
He was not one that prayers or tears might move;
For he had never known that passion's power,
And could not pardon it in others. Love
To him was folly and a feverish dream,
A girl's most vain romance—he did but mock
Its truth and its devotion. "You shall win
Your lady love," he said with scornful smile,

" If you can bear her, ere the sun is set,
To yonder summit: 'tis but a light burden,
And I have heard that lovers can do wonders!"
He deemed it might not be; but what has love
E'er found impossible! - - - - -
Leandro took his mistress in his arms.
Crowds gathered round to look on the pale youth,
And his yet paler Inez; but she hid
Her face upon his bosom, and her hair,
Whose loose black tresses floated on the wind,
Was wet with tears! - - They paused to rest awhile
Beneath a mulberry's cool sanctuary—
(Ill-omened tree, two lovers met their death
Beneath thy treacherous shade! 'Twas in old time
Even as now:)—it spread its branches round,
The fruit hung like dark rubies 'mid the green

Of the thick leaves, and there like treasures shone
Balls of bright gold, the silk-worm's summer palace.
Leandro spoke most cheerfully, and soothed
The weeping girl beside him; but when next
He loosed her from his arms he did not speak,
And Inez wept in agony to look
Upon his burning brow! The veins were swelled,
The polished marble of those temples now
Was turned to crimson—the large heavy drops
Rolled over his flushed cheek—his lips were parched,
And moistened but with blood; each breath he drew
Was a convulsive gasp! She bathed his face
With the cool stream, and laid her cheek to his—
Bade him renounce his perilous attempt,
And said, at least they now might die together!
He did not listen to her words, but watched

The reddening west—the sun was near the wave:
He caught the fainting Inez in his arms—
One desperate struggle—he has gained the top,
And the broad sun has sunk beneath the river!
A shout arose from those who watched; but why
Does still Leandro kneel, and Inez hang
Motionless round his neck? The blood has gushed—
The life-blood from his heart! a vein had burst.
- - - And Inez was dead too! - - -

THE PAINTER.

I know not which is the most fatal gift,
Genius or Love, for both alike are ruled
By stars of bright aspect and evil influence.

He was a lonely and neglected child!
His cheek was colourless, save when the flush
Of strong emotion mastered its still whiteness;
His dark eyes seemed all heaviness and gloom,
So rarely were they raised. His mother's love
Was for her other children: they were fair,
And had health's morning hues and sunny looks.
She had not seen him, when he watched the sun
Setting at eve, like an idolater,
Until his cheek grew crimson in the light
Of the all-radiant heaven, and his eyes

Were passionately eloquent, all filled
With earth's most glorious feelings. And his father,
A warrior and a hunter, one whose grasp
Was ever on the bridle or the brand,
Had no pride in a boy whose joy it was
To sit for hours by a fountain side
Listening its low and melancholy song.
Or wander through the gardens silently,
As if with leaves and flowers alone he held
Aught of companionship. In his first years
They sent him to a convent, for they said
Its solitude would suit with Guido's mood.
And there he dwelt, while treasuring those rich thoughts
That are the food on which young genius lives.
He rose to watch the sunlight over Rome
Break from its purple shadows, making glad

Even that desolate city, whose dim towers,
Ruins, and palaces, seem as they looked
Back on departed time. Then in the gloom
Of his own convent's silent burying ground,
Where, o'er the quiet dead, the cypresses mourned,
He pass'd the noon, dreaming those dear day-dreams,
Not so much hopes as fancies. Then at eve,
When through the painted windows the red sun
Rainbowed the marble floor with radiant hues,
Where spread the ancient church's stately arch,
He stayed, till the deep music of the hymn,
Chanted to the rich organ's rolling notes,
Bade farewell to the day. Then to his cell
He went, and through the casement's iron bars
The moon looked on him, tenderly as Love,
Lighting his slumber. On the church's wall

There hung one lovely portrait, and for hours
Would Guido, in the fulness of his heart,
Kneel, watching till he wept. The subject was
A dying Magdalene. Her long black hair
Spread round her like a shroud, one pale thin hand
Pillowed a cheek as thin and pale, and scarce
The blue light of the eyes was visible
For the death dampness on the darkened lids;—
As one more effort to look on the cross,
Which seemed just falling from the fainting arm,
And they would close for ever. In that look
There was a painter's immortality,
And Guido felt it deeply, for a gift
Like his whose work that was, was given him,—
A gift of beauty and of power,—and soon
He lived but in the exquisite creations

His pencil called to life. But as his thoughts
Took wider range, he languished to behold
More of a world he thought must be so fair,
So filled with glorious shapes. It chanced that he
Whose hand had traced that pale sad loveliness,
Came to the convent; with rejoicing wonder
He marked how like an unknown mine, whose gold
Gathers in silence, had young Guido's mind
Increased in lonely richness; every day
New veins of splendid thought sprang into life.
And Guido left his convent cell with one
Who, like a geni, bore him into scenes
Of marvel and enchantment. And then first
Did Guido feel how very precious praise
Is to young genius, like sunlight on flowers,
Ripening them into fruit. And time pass'd on;—

The lonely and neglected child became
One whom all Rome was proud of, and he dwelt
There in the sunshine of his spreading fame.
There was a melancholy beauty shed
Over his pictures, as the element
In which his genius lived was sorrow. Love
He made most lovely, but yet ever sad;
Passionate partings, such as wring the heart
Till tears are life-blood; meetings, when the cheek
Has lost all hope of health in the long parting;
The grave, with one mourning in solitude:
These made his fame, and were his excellence,—
The painter of deep tears. He had just gained
The summer of his glory and of his days,
When his remembering art was called to give
A longer memory to one whose life

Was but a thread. Her history may be told
In one word—love. And what has love e'er been
But misery to woman? Still she wished—
It was a dying fancy which betrayed
How much, though known how false its god had been,
Her soul clung to its old idolatry,—
To send her pictured semblance to the false one.
She hoped—how love will hope!—it might recall
The young and lovely girl his cruelty
Had worn to this dim shadow; it might wake
Those thousand fond and kind remembrances
Which he had utterly abandoned, while
The true heart he had treasured next his own
A little time, had never ceased to beat
For only him, until it broke. She leant
Beside a casement when first Guido looked

Upon her wasted beauty. 'T was the brow,
The Grecian outline in its perfect grace,
That he had learnt to worship in his youth,
By gazing on that Magdalene, whose face
Was yet a treasure in his memory;
But sunken were the temples,—they had lost
Their ivory roundness, yet still clear as day
The veins shone through them, shaded by the braids,
Just simply parted back, of the dark hair,
Where grief's white traces mocked at youth. A flush,
As shame, deep shame, had once burnt on her cheek,
Then lingered there for ever, looked like health
Offering hope, vain hope, to the pale lip;
Like the rich crimson of the evening sky,
Brightest when night is coming. Guido took
Just one slight sketch; next morning she was dead!

Yet still he painted on, until his heart
Grew to the picture,—it became his world,—
He lived but in its beauty, made his art
Sacred to it alone. No more he gave
To the glad canvass green and summer dreams
Of the Italian valleys; traced no more
The dark eyes of its lovely daughters, looked
And caught the spirit of fine poetry
From glorious statues: these were pass'd away.
Shade after shade, line after line, each day
Gave life to the sweet likeness. Guido dwelt
In intense worship on his own creation,
Till his cheek caught the hectic tinge he drew,
And his thin hand grew tremulous. One night—
The portrait was just finished, save a touch,
A touch to give the dark light of the eyes—

He painted till the lamps grew dim, his hand
Scarce conscious what it wrought; at length his lids
Closed in a heavy slumber, and he dream'd
That a fair creature came and kissed his brow,
And bade him follow her: he knew the look,
And rose. Awakening, he found himself
Kneeling before the portrait:—'twas so fair
He deemed it lived, and press'd his burning lips
To the sweet mouth; his soul pass'd in that kiss,—
Young Guido died beside his masterpiece!

A VILLAGE TALE.

. . . . . How the spirit clings
To that which once it loved, with the same feeling
That makes the traveller turn from his way
To look upon some boyish haunt, though dark
And very desolate grown, no longer like
That which was dear to him.

It was a low white church: the elm which grew
Beside it shadowed half the roof; the clock
Was placed where full the sun-beams fell;—what deep,
Simple morality spoke in those hands,
Going their way in silence, till a sound,
Solemn and sweet, made their appeal to Time,
And the hour spoke its only warning!—Strange
To note how mute the soft song of the wren,
Whose nest was in that old elm-tree, became
When the clock struck: and when it ceased again,

Its music like a natural anthem breathed.
Lowly the osier'd graves around, wild flowers
Their epitaph, and not one monument
Was there rich with the sculptor's graceful art.
There sat one, by a grave whose weeded turf
Shewed more than common care, his face bent down,
A fine and manly brow, though sun and wind
Had darkened it, and that a shade of grief
Seemed natural from long habit; by his side
A little laughing child, with clear blue eyes,
Cheek like a dimpled rose, and sunny curls,
Was gathering blossoms, gathering but to crush,
Till the sod was all colours with the leaves.
Even in childhood's innocence of pleasure
Lives that destroying spirit which in time
Will waste, then want, the best of happiness.

I marked the boy's companion: he was yet
In life's first summer; and he seemed to watch
With such sad tenderness the child, which came
When tired to nestle in his bosom, sure
That it was welcome,—and the grave was kept
So fresh, so green, so covered with sweet flowers,
I deemed 'twas some young widower, whose love
Had pass'd away, or ever it had known
One sting of sorrow or one cloud of care,—
Pass'd in its first delicious confidence
Of vowed affection;—'twas the grave, I thought,
Of his young wife, and that the child was left
A dear memorial of that cherished one.
I read his history wrong. In early youth,
When hopes and pleasures flit like butterflies
Around our pleasant spring, had Edward loved,

And sought in Marion's deep blue eyes his world,—
Loved with the truth, the fervour of first love,
That delicate bloom which can come o'er the soul
But only once. All other thoughts and feelings
The heart may know again, but first love never!
Its hopes, bright as the azure flower that springs
Where'er the radiance of the rainbow falls;
Its fears, soft as the leaves that shade the lily;
Its fairy-land romance, its tenderness,
Its timid, and yet passionate devotion—
These are not annual blooms, that die, then rise
Again into another summer world.
They may live long, and be the life of life,
But, like the rose, when they are once destroyed
They perish utterly. And, like that tree,
How sweet a memory, too, remains! though dead

The green leaves, and decayed the stem, yet still
The spirit of fragrance lingers, loath to leave
Its dear abode. Just so love haunts the heart,
Though withered, and to be revived no more.
Oh, nothing has the memory of love!

It was a summer twilight; crimson lights
Played o'er the bridal bowers of the west,
And in the grey horizon the white moon
Was faintly visible, just where the sky
Met the green rolling of the shadowy sea.
Upon a little hill, whose broken ridge
Was covered with the golden furze, and heath
Gay with its small pink blossoms, in a shade
Formed of thick hazels and the graceful sweep
Of the ash-boughs, an old beach-trunk the seat,
With a sweet canopy of honeysuckle

Mixed with the wild briar-roses, Edward sat,
Happy, for Marion lean'd upon his bosom
In the deep fondness of the parting hour;
One of those partings memory will keep
Among its precious things. The setting sun
Shed such rich colour o'er the cheek, which press'd
Closer and closer, like a rose, that sought
A shelter next his heart; the radiant eyes,
Glorious as though the sky's own light were there,
Yet timid, blue, and tender as the dove's;
The soft arm thrown around his neck; the hair
Falling in such profusion o'er a face
That nestled like a bird upon his breast.
Murmurs, the very breath of happiness;
Low and delighted sighs, and lengthened looks,
As life were looking words inaudible,

Yet full of music; whispers such as are
What love should ever speak in, soft yet deep,
As jealous even that the air should share
In the delicious feeling. And around,
All seemed the home and atmosphere of love:
The air sweet with the woodbine and the rose;
The rich red light of evening; the far sea,
So still, so calm; the vale, with its corn-fields
Shooting their green spears 'mid the scarlet banners
Of the wild poppies; meadows with the hay
Scattered in fragrance, clover yet uncut.
And in the distance a small wood, where oaks
And elms threw giant shadows; and a river
Winding, now hidden and now visible,
Till close beside their bower it held its course,
And fed a little waterfall, the harp

That answered to the woodlark's twilight hymn.
Their last, last evening! Ah, the many vows
That Edward and his Marion pledged! She took
A golden ring and broke it, hid one half
Next her own heart, then cut a shining curl,
As bright as the bright gift, and round his neck
Fastened the silken braid, and bade him keep
The ring and hair for Marion's sake. They talked
Of pleasant hopes, of Edward's quick return
With treasure gathered on the stormy deep,
And how they then would build a little cot;
They chose the very place; and the bright moon
Shone in her midnight, ere their schemes
Were half complete. They parted. The next morn
With the day-blush had Marion sought that bower
Alone, and watched upon the distant sea

A ship just visible to those long looks
With which love gazes. . . . How most sweet it is
To have one lonely treasure, which the heart
Can feed upon in secret, which can be
A star in sorrow, and a flower in joy;
A thought to which all other thoughts refer;
A hope, from whence all other hopes arise,
Nurs'd in the solitude of happiness!
Love, passionate young Love, how sweet it is
To have the bosom made a Paradise
By thee—life lighted by thy rainbow smile!
Edward lived in one feeling, one that made
Care, toil, and suffering pleasant; and he hailed
England, dear England, happy in success,
In hope, and love. It was a summer morn—
The very season he had left that vale—

When he returned. How cheerfully the fields,
Spread in their green luxuriance of corn,
The purple clover, and the new-cut hay,
Loading the air with fragrance! the soft river,
Winding so gently! there seemed nothing changed,
And Edward's heart was filled with gladness: all,
He fancied, looked as if they welcomed him.
His eyes filled with sweet tears, and hasty words
Of love and thankfulness came to his lips.
His path lay through the churchyard, and the bells
Were ringing for a wedding. What fond thoughts
They wakened, of how merrily their round
Would peal for him and Marion! He kissed
The broken ring, the braid of golden hair,
And bounded, with light step and lighter heart,
Across the churchyard; from it he could see

The cottage where his own true maiden dwelt.
Just then the bridal party left the church,
And, half unconsciously, young Edward looked
Upon the bride—that bride was Marion!
He stopped not in the village,—spoke to none,—
But went again to sea; and never smile
Lighted the settled darkness in his eyes:
His cheek grew pale, his hair turned grey, his voice
Became so sad and low. He once had loved
To look upon the sunset, as that hour
Brought pleasant memories, such as feed sweet hopes;
Now ever gazed he on it with the look
Of the young widow over her fair child,
Her only child, in the death agony.
His heart was withered. Yet, although so false,
He never parted with his Marion's gift:

Still the soft curl and the bright ring were kept,
Like treasures, in his bosom. Years passed by
And he grew tired of wandering; back he came
To his own village, as a place of rest.
'Twas a drear autumn morning, and the trees
Were bare, or covered but with yellow leaves;
The fields lay fallow, and a drizzling rain
Fell gloomily: it seemed as all was changed,
Even as he himself was changed; the bell
Of the old church was tolling dolefully
The farewell of the living to the dead.
The grave was scant, the holy words were said
Hurriedly, coldly: but for a poor child,
That begged the pit to give him back his mother,
There had not been one single tear. The boy
Kept on his wail; but all his prayers were made

To the dark tomb, as conscious those around
Would chide if he asked them; and when they threw
The last earth on the coffin, down he laid
His little head, and sobbed most bitterly.
And Edward took him in his arms, and kissed
His wet pale cheeks; while the child clung to him,
Not with the shyness of one petted, loved,
And careless of a stranger's fond caress,
But like one knowing well what kindness was,
But knew not where to seek it, as he pined
Beneath neglect and harshness, fear and want.
'Twas strange, this mingling of their destinies:
That boy was Marion's—it was Marion's grave!
She had died young, and poor, and broken-hearted.
Her husband had deserted her: one child
Was buried with its mother, one was left

An orphan unto chance; but Edward took
The boy unto him even as his own.
He buried the remembrance of his wrongs,
Only recalling that he once had loved,
And that his love was dead.

THE SISTERS.

Now, Maiden, wilt thou come with me,
Far over yonder moonlight sea?
There's not a cloud upon the sky,
The wind is low like thine own sigh;
The azure heaven is veined with light,
The water is as calm and bright
As I have sometimes seen it lie
Beneath a sunny Indian sky.
My bark is on the ocean riding,
Like a spirit o'er it gliding;
Maiden, wilt thou come—and be
Queen of my fair ship and me?

She followed him. The sweet night breeze
Brought odours from the orange trees,—
She paused not for their fragrant sigh:
There came a sound of music nigh,
A voice of song, a distant chime
To mark the vespers' starry time,—
She heard it not: the moonbeams fell
O'er vine-wreathed hill and olive dell,
With cottages, and their gay show
Of roses for a portico;
One which stood by a beech alone,—
Looked she not back upon that one?
Alas! she looked but in that eye
Where now was writ her destiny.
The heart love leaves looks back ever;
The heart where he is dwelling, never.

Yet as her last step left the strand,
Gheraldi then might feel her hand
Grow cold, and tremble in his own:
He watched her lip, its smile was flown;
Her cheek was pale, as if with fears;
Her blue eyes darkened with their tears:
He prest her rosebud mouth to his,
Blush, smile, returned to grace that kiss;
She had not power to weep, yet know
She was his own, come weal come wo.
Oh, who—reposed on some fond breast,
Love's own delicious place of rest—
Reading faith in the watching eyes,
Feeling the heart beat with its sighs,
Could know regrets, or doubts, or cares,
That we had bound our fate with theirs!

There was a shadow on their mirth;
A vacant place is by their hearth,
When at the purple evening's close
Around its firelight gathered those
With whom her youth's sweet course had run,
Wept, for the lost, the altered one!
She was so beautiful, so dear,
All that the heart holds precious here!
A skylark voice, whose lightest sound
So glad made evey heart-pulse bound!
'Twas a fair sight to see her glide,
A constant shadow by the side
Of her old Father! At day-rise,
With light feet and with sunny eyes,
Busy within: and then, at times,
Singing old snatches of wild rhymes

Italian peasants treasure up,
O'erflowings of the poet's cup,
Suited to those whose earth and sky,
Temples and groves, are poetry.
And then at eve, her raven hair
Braided upon a brow as fair
As are the snowy chestnut flowers
When blooming in the first spring hours,
She sat beneath the old beech tree,
Her mandolin upon her knee.
But Blanche was gone, and guilt and shame
Made harsh the music of her name.
—But he had yet another child,—
The Father Blanche could leave,—who smiled
Gently and cheerfully away
The cloud that on his spirit lay.

It was a lovely morn in June,
And in the rosy light of noon
The olive crowned village shone
As the glad sun were all its own;
And, suiting with such golden hours,
With music, and with songs and flowers,
A bridal train pass'd gaily by:
In the midst, with blue downcast eye
And blush of happiness, came the Bride!
And youths with flutes were by her side,
And maidens, with their wreaths, as gay
As life but lasted one sweet day.

One followed them with bursting heart,
With pallid cheek, and lips apart,
As every breath were gasped! Ah this,
Alas, is what love ever is!

False or unhappy, twin to sorrow,
Forced Hope's deceiving lights to borrow,
Gilding in joy a little way,
Doubly to lead the heart astray.
Beneath a shadowy beech tree
At length paused the gay company:
And there sat an old Man. The Bride
Took off her veil, and knelt beside,
And from his feet looked up and smiled,
And prayed that he would bless his child!
The gentle prayer was scarcely said,
Yet lay his hand upon her head!
When knelt another in that place,
With shrouded form and veiled face;
A broken voice breath'd some low words,
They struck on memory's tenderest chords:

"My Blanche! yes, only ask of Heaven,
Thy father has long since forgiven.
Look up!" "Oh not till thou hast pray'd
For the unhappy and betrayed!"
And paused at once the bridal song,
And gathered round the gazing throng.
And as the old man prayed, Blanche press'd
Closer and closer to his breast!
He raised her, for he longed to gaze
Upon the loved of other days,
And threw the veil back from her head,
And looked,—but looked upon the dead!

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

Oh, there are evil moments in our life,
When but a thought, a word, a look, has power
To dash the cup of happiness aside,
And stamp us wretched!

And there are bitter tears in Arnold's hall—
A wail of passionate lament! The night
Is on the towers, but night has not brought
Silence and sleep. A sound is in the courts,
Of arms and armed men; the ring of spears,
The tramp of iron feet, and voices, mixed
In deep confusion. With the morning's rise,
Lord Arnold leads these men to Palestine.

There were two figures on a terrace, raised

O'er all the rest. The moon was on its sweep,
Lighting the landscape's midnight loveliness!
Below it, first were gardens set with flowers,
In beds of many shape and quaint device,
So very sweet they filled the air with scents;
Beyond, the ground was steep and rough; dwarf oak,
Spring on the sides, but all the nobler growth
Of those proud trees was seen in yon dark wood,
Its world of leaves blent with the distant sky,
And sheltering a green park, where the smooth grass
Was fitting herbage for the gentle fawn,
Which sported by its mother's spotted side,
And some so white that in the moon they shone
Like silver. In the midst, a diamond sheet
Of clear bright water spread, and on its breast
Gathered a group of swans; and there was one,

Laid on a little island which the leaves
Of the waterflag had made; and suddenly
A sound of music rose, and leaf and flower
Seemed hushed to hear the sweet and solemn hymn
Sung by the dying swan. And then the two
Upon the terrace, who as yet had looked
But in each other's eyes, turned to the lake:
It was to them, even as if their love
Had made itself a voice to breathe Farewell!—
Ceased the unearthly song, and Adeline
Threw her on Arnold's breast, and wept, and said
It was her warrior's dirge and hers—for never
Such sad sweet sounds had breathed on mortal ear,
And yet no omen. But her Arnold kiss'd
Her tears away; and whispered 'twas the song
Of some kind Spirit, who would guard his love

While he was fighting for the Cross afar.
Oh, who can tell the broken-heartedness
Of parting moments!—the fond words that gush
From the full heart, and yet die in the throat,
Whose pulses are too choked for utterance;
The lingering look of eyes half blind with tears;
The yet more lingering kiss, as if it were
The last long breath of life! Then the slow step,
Changing anon to one of hurried speed,
As that the heart doubted its own resolve!
The fixed gaze of her, who, left behind,
Watches till shadows grow reality!
And then the sudden and sick consciousness—
How desolate we are!—Oh, misery!
Thy watchword is, Farewell!—And Arnold took
A few sweet buds from off a myrtle tree,

And swore to Adeline, before the spring
Had covered twice that plant with its white flowers
He would return. With the next morning's sun
Lord Arnold led his vassals to the war,
And Adeline was left to solitude—
The worst of solitude, of home and heart.
If I must part from those whom I have loved,
Let me, too, part from where they were beloved!
It wrings the heart to see each thing the same;
Tread over the same steps; and then to find
The difference in the heart. It is so sad—
So very lonely—to be the sole one
In whom there is a sign of change! - - -
There are two words to tell the warrior's course,
Valour and Victory. But fortune changed,
And Arnold was a prisoner at last.

And there he lay and pined, till hope grew tired,
Even of its sweet self; and now despair
Reached its last stage, for it was grown familiar.
Change came, when there was not a thought of change
But in his dreams. Thanks to a pitying Slave
Whom he had spared in battle, he escaped!
And over sea and land the pilgrim went.
It was a summer evening, when again
He stood before his castle, and he paused
In the excess of happiness. The sun
Had set behind the towers, whose square heights
Divided the red west; and on its verge,
Just where the crimson faded, was a star—
The twilight star—pale, like dew turned to light.
Thro' the fair park he wandered on, and pass'd

The lake and its white swans: at length he came
To his sweet garden and its thousand flowers.
The roses were in blossom, and the air
Oppressed him with its fragrance. On a walk,
As if just fallen from some beauty's hair,
There lay a branch of myrtle — Arnold caught
Its leaves, and kiss'd them! — Sure, 'twas Adeline's!
He stood now by a little alcove, made
Of flowers and green boughs — Adeline is there —
But, wo for Arnold, she is not alone! —
So lovely, and so false! — There, there she sat,
Her white arm round a stranger's neck, her fair brow
Bowed on his shoulder, while her long black hair
Streamed o'er his bosom — There they sat, so still,
Like statues in that light; and Arnold thought
How often he had leant with Adeline

In such sweet silence. But they rose to go;
And then he marked how tenderly the youth
Drew his cloak round her, lest the dew should fall
Upon her fragile beauty. They were gone—
And Arnold threw him on the turf, which still
Retained the pressure of her fairy feet—
Then started wildly from the ground, and fled
As life and death were on his speed. His towers
Were but a little distant from the sea;
And ere the morning broke, Arnold was tossed
Far over the blue wave. He did not go,
As the young warrior goes, with hope and pride,
As he once went; but as a pilgrim, roamed
O'er other countries, any but his own.
At last his steps sought pleasant Italy.
It was one autumn evening that he reached

A little valley in the Apennine:
It lay amid the heights—a resting place
Of quiet and deep beauty. On one side
A forest of a thousand pines arose,
Darkened with many winters; on the left
Stood the steep-crags, where, even in July,
The white snow lay, carved into curious shapes
Of turret, pinnacle, and battlement;
And in the front, the opening mountains showed
The smiling plains of grape-clad Tuscany;
And farther still was caught the sky-like sweep
Of the blue ocean. Small white cottages
And olive trees filled up the dell. But, hid
By the sole group of cypresses, whose boughs,
As the green weeping of the sea-weed, hung
Like grief or care around, a temple stood

Of purest marble, with its carved dome
And white Corinthian pillars strangely wreathed
By the thick ivy leaves. In other days,
Some nymph or goddess had been worshipped there,
Whose name was gone, even from her own shrine.
The cross stood on the altar, and above
There hung the picture of Saint Valerie:
Its pale calm beauty suited well the maid,
Who left the idol pleasures of the world
For solitude and heaven in early youth.
And Arnold knelt to the sweet saint, and prayed
For pity and for pardon; and his heart
Clung to the place, and thought upon repose.
He made himself a home in the same cave
Where once St. Valerie had dwelt: a rill,
That trickled from the rock above, his drink,

The mountain fruits his food: and there he lived:
Peasants, and one or two tired pilgrims, all
That e'er disturbed his hermit solitude.
Long months had passed away, when one hot noon
He sat beneath the cypresses, and saw
A pilgrim slowly urging up the height:
The sun was on her head, yet turned she not
To seek the shade beside; the path was rough;
Yet there she toiled, though the green turf was near.
At last she reached the shrine—and Arnold knew
His Adeline! Her slender frame was bent,
And her small feet left a red trace behind—
The blood flowed from them. And he saw her kneel,
And heard her pray for him and his return.
"Adeline! art thou true?"—One moment more
Her head is on his bosom, and his lips

Feeding on her pale cheek! —He heard it all—
How that youth was her brother, just returned
From fighting with the Infidels in Spain;
That he had gone to Palestine to seek
Some tidings of her Arnold; and, meanwhile,
Herself had vowed a barefoot pilgrimage
To pray St. Valerie to bless the search! —
And she indeed had blessed it! —
There is that English castle once again,
With its green sweep of park and its clear lake;
And there that bower; and in its shade is placed
A statue of St. Valerie; and a shrine,
Graven with names of those who placed it here,
Record and tribute of their happiness—
Arnold and Adeline!

FUGITIVE PIECES.

THE FACTORY.

'Tis an accursed thing!—

THERE rests a shade above yon town,
A dark funereal shroud:
'Tis not the tempest hurrying down,
'Tis not a summer cloud.

The smoke that rises on the air
Is as a type and sign;
A shadow flung by the despair
Within those streets of thine.

That smoke shuts out the cheerful day,
The sunset's purple hues,

The moonlight's pure and tranquil ray,
The morning's pearly dews.

Such is the moral atmosphere
Around thy daily life;
Heavy with care, and pale with fear,
With future tumult rife.

There rises on the morning wind
A low appealing cry,
A thousand children are resigned
To sicken and to die!

We read of Moloch's sacrifice,
We sicken at the name,
And seem to hear the infant cries—
And yet we do the same;—

And worse—'twas but a moment's pain
The heathen altar gave,
But we give years,—our idol, Gain,
Demands a living grave!

How precious is the little one,
Before his mother's sight,
With bright hair dancing in the sun,
And eyes of azure light!

He sleeps as rosy as the south,
For summer days are long;
A prayer upon the little mouth,
Lull'd by his nurse's song.

Love is around him, and his hours
Are innocent and free;

His mind essays its early powers
Beside his mother's knee.

When after-years of trouble come,
Such as await man's prime,
How will he think of that dear home,
And childhood's lovely time!

And such should childhood ever be,
The fairy well; to bring
To life's worn, weary memory
The freshness of its spring.

But here the order is reversed,
And infancy, like age,
Knows of existence but its worst,
One dull and darkened page;—

Written with tears, and stamp'd with toil,
Crushed from the earliest hour,
Weeds darkening on the bitter soil
That never knew a flower.

Look on yon child, it droops the head,
Its knees are bow'd with pain;
It mutters from its wretched bed,
"Oh, let me sleep again!"

Alas! 'tis time, the mother's eyes
Turn mournfully away;
Alas! 'tis time, the child must rise,
And yet it is not day.

The lantern's lit—she hurries forth,
The spare cloak's scanty fold

Scarce screens her from the snowy north,
The child is pale and cold.

And wearily the little hands
Their task accustom'd ply;
While daily, some mid those pale bands,
Droop, sicken, pine, and die.

Good God! to think upon a child
That has no childish days,
No careless play, no frolics wild,
No words of prayer and praise!

Man from the cradle—'tis too soon
To earn their daily bread,
And heap the heat and toil of noon
Upon an infant's head.

To labour ere their strength be come,
Or starve,—is such the doom
That makes of many an English home
One long and living tomb?

Is there no pity from above,—
No mercy in those skies;
Hath then the heart of man no love,
To spare such sacrifice?

Oh, England! though thy tribute waves
Proclaim thee great and free,
While those small children pine like slaves,
There is a curse on thee!

APRIL.

Of all the months that fill the year
Give April's month to me,
For earth and sky are then so filled
With sweet variety.

The apple-blossoms' shower of rose,
The pear-tree's pearly hue,
As beautiful as Woman's blush,
As evanescent too.

The purple light, that like a sigh
Comes from the violet bed,

As there the perfumes of the East
Had all their odours shed.

The wild-briar rose, a fragrant cup
To hold the morning's tear;
The bird's-eye, like a sapphire star;
The primrose, pale like fear.

The balls that hang like drifted snow
Upon the guelderose;
The woodbine's fairy trumpets, where
The elf his war-note blows.

On every bough there is a bud,
In every bud a flower;
But scarcely bud or flower will last
Beyond the present hour.

Now comes a shower-cloud o'er the sky,
Then all again sunshine;
Then clouds again, but brightened with
The rainbow's coloured line.

Ay, this, this is the month for me!
I could not love a scene
Where the blue sky was always blue,
The green earth always green.

It is like love; oh, love should be
An ever-changing thing,—
The love that I could worship must
Be ever on the wing.

The chain my mistress flings round me
Must be both brief and bright;

Or formed of opals, which will change
With every changing light.

To-morrow she must turn to sighs
The smiles she wore to-day;
This moment's look of tenderness,
The next one must be gay.

Sweet April! thou the emblem art
Of what my love must be;
One varying like the varying bloom
Is just the love for me.

GLENCOE.

Lay by the harp, sing not that song,
Although so very sweet;
It is a song of other years,
For thee and me unmeet.

Thy head is pillowed on my arm,
Thy heart beats close to mine;
Methinks it were unjust to heaven,
If we should now repine.

I must not weep, you must not sing
That thrilling song again,—

I dare not think upon the time
When last I heard that strain.

It was a silent summer eve:
We stood by the hill side,
And we could see my ship afar
Breasting the ocean tide.

Around us grew the graceful larch,
A calm blue sky above,
Beneath were little cottages,
The homes of peace and love.

Thy harp was by thee then, as now,
One hand in mine was laid;
The other, wandering 'mid the chords,
A soothing music made:

Just two or three sweet chords, that seemed
An echo of thy tone,—
The cushat's song was on the wind
And mingled with thine own.

I looked upon the vale beneath,
I looked on thy sweet face;
I thought how dear, this voyage o'er,
Would be my resting place.

We parted; but I kept thy kiss,—
Thy last one,—and its sigh—
As safely as the stars are kept
In yonder azure sky.

Again I stood by that hill side,
And scarce I knew the place,

For fire, and blood, and death, had left
On every thing their trace.

The lake was covered o'er with weeds,
Choked was our little rill,
There was no sign of corn or grass,
The cushat's song was still:

Burnt to the dust, an ashy heap
Was every cottage round;—
I listened, but I could not hear
One single human sound:

I spoke, and only my own words
Were echoed from the hill;
I sat me down to weep, and curse
The hand that wrought this ill.

We met again by miracle:
Thou wert another one
Saved from this work of sin and death,—
I was not quite alone.

And then I heard the evil tale
Of guilt and suffering,
Till I prayed the curse of God might fall
On the false-hearted king.

I will not think on this,—for thou
Art saved, and saved for me!
And gallantly my little bark
Cuts through the moonlight sea.

There's not a shadow in the sky,
The waves are bright below;

I must not, on so sweet a night,
Think upon dark Glencoe.

If thought were vengeance, then its thought
A ceaseless fire should be,
Burning by day, burning by night,
Kept like a thought of thee.

But I am powerless and must flee;—
That e'er a time should come,
When we should shun our own sweet land,
And seek another home!

This must not be,—yon soft moonlight
Falls on my heart like balm;
The waves are still, the air is hushed,
And I too will be calm.

Away! we seek another land
Of hope, stars, flowers, sunshine;
I shall forget the dark green hills
Of that which once was mine!

THE WRECK.

THE moonlight fell on the stately ship;
It shone over sea and sky;
And there was nothing but water and air
To meet the gazing eye.

Bright and blue spread the heaven above,
Bright and blue spread the sea;
The stars from their home shone down on the wave,
Till they seemed in the wave to be.

With silver foam like a cloud behind,
That vessel cut her way;

But the shadow she cast, was the sole dark thing
That upon the waters lay.

With steps of power, and with steps of pride,
The lord of the vessel paced
The deck, as he thought on the waves below,
And the glorious heaven he faced.

One moment's pause, and his spirit fell
From its bearing high and proud—
But yet it was not a thought of fear,
That the seaman's spirit bow'd:

For he had stood on the deck when washed
With blood, and that blood his own;
When the dying were pillowed upon the dead,
And yet you heard not a groan—

For the shout of battle came on the wind,
And the cannon roar'd aloud;
And the heavy smoke hung round each ship,
Even like its death shroud.

And he had guided the helm, when fate
Seemed stepping every wave,
And the wind swept away the wreath of foam,
To show a yawning grave.

But this most sweet and lighted calm,
Its blue and midnight hour,
Wakened the hidden springs of his heart
With a deep and secret power.

Is there some nameless boding sent,
Like a noiseless voice from the tomb?—

A spirit note from the other world,
To warn of death and doom?

He thought of his home, of his own fair land,
And the warm tear rushed to his eye;
Almost with fear he looked around,
But no cloud was on the sky.

He sought his cabin, and joined his band—
The wine cup was passing round;
He joined in their laugh, he joined in the song,
But no mirth was in the sound.

Peaceful they sought their quiet sleep,
In the soft and lovely night;
But, like life, the sea was false, and hid
The cold dark rock from sight.

At midnight there came a sudden shock,
And the sleepers sprang from bed;
There was one fierce cry of last despair—
The waves closed over head.

There was no dark cloud on the morning sky,
No fierce wind on the morning air;
The sun shone over the proud ship's track,
But no proud ship was there!

MOON.

THE Moon is sailing o'er the sky,
But lonely all, as if she pined
For somewhat of companionship,
And felt it was in vain she shined:

Earth is her mirror, and the stars
Are as the court around her throne;
She is a beauty and a queen;
But what is this? she is alone.

Is there not one—not one—to share
Thy glorious royalty on high?

I cannot choose but pity thee,
Thou lovely orphan of the sky.

I'd rather be the meanest flower
That grows, my mother Earth, on thee,
So there were others of my kin,
To blossom, bloom, droop, die with me.

Earth, thou hast sorrow, grief, and death;
But with these better could I bear,
Than reach and rule yon radiant sphere,
And be a Solitary there.

THE FROZEN SHIP.

THE fair ship cut the billows,
And her path lay white behind,
And dreamily amid her sails
Scarce moved the sleeping wind.

The sailors sang their gentlest songs,
Whose words were home and love;
Waveless the wide sea spread beneath—
And calm the heaven above.

But as they sung, each voice turn'd low,
Albeit they knew not why;
For quiet was the waveless sea,
And cloudless was the sky.

But the clear air was cold as clear;
'Twas pain to draw the breath;
And the silence and the chill around
Were e'en like those of death.

Colder and colder grew the air,
Spell-bound seem'd the waves to be;
And ere night fell, they knew they were lock'd
In the arms of that icy sea.

Stiff lay the sail, chain-like the ropes,
And snow pass'd o'er the main;
Each thought, but none spoke, of distant home
They should never see again.

Each look'd upon his comrade's face,
Pale as funereal stone;

Yet none could touch the other's hand,
For none could feel his own.

Like statues fixed, that gallant band
Stood on the dread deck to die;
The sleet was their shroud, the wind their dirge,
And their churchyard the sea and the sky.

Fond eyes watch'd by their native shore
And prayers to the wild winds gave;
But never again came that stately ship
To breast the English wave.

Hope grew fear, and fear grew hope,
Till both alike were done:
And the bride lay down in her grave alone,
And the mother without her son.

Years pass'd, and of that goodly ship
Nothing of tidings came;
Till, in after-time, when her fate had grown
But a tale of fear and a name—

It was beneath a tropic sky
The tale was told to me;
The sailor who told, in his youth had been
Over that icy sea.

He said it was fearful to see them stand,
Nor the living nor yet the dead,
And the light glared strange in the glassy eyes
Whose human look was fled.

For frost had done one half life's part,
And kept them from decay;

Those they loved had mouldered, but these
Look'd the dead of yesterday.

Peace to the souls of the graveless dead!
'Twas an awful doom to dree;
But fearful and wondrous are thy works,
O God! in the boundless sea!

THE MINSTREL'S MONITOR.

SILENT and dark as the source of yon river,
Whose birth-place we know not, and seek not to know,
Though wild as the flight of the shaft from yon quiver,
Is the course of its waves as in music they flow.

The lily flings o'er it its silver white blossom,
Like ivory barks which a fairy hath made;
The rose o'er it bends with its beautiful bosom,
As though 'twere enamour'd itself of its shade.

The sunshine, like Hope, in its noontide hour slumbers
On the stream, as it loved the bright place of its rest;

And its waves pass in song, as the sea shell's soft numbers
Had given to those waters their sweetest and best.

The banks that surround it are flower-dropt and sunny;
There the first birth of violets' odour-showers weep—
There the bee heaps his earliest treasure of honey,
Or sinks in the depths of the harebell to sleep.

Like prisoners escaped during night from their prison,
The waters fling gaily their spray to the sun;
Who can tell me from whence that glad river has risen?
Who can say whence its springs in its beauty?—not one.

Oh my heart, and my song, which is as my heart's flowing,
Read thy fate in yon river, for such is thine own!
Mid those the chief praise on thy music bestowing,
Who cares for the lips from whence issue the tone?

Dark as its birth-place so dark is my spirit,
Whence yet the sweet waters of melody came:
'Tis the long after-course, not the source, will inherit
The beauty and glory of sunshine and fame.

THE SPIRIT AND THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

SPIRIT. I have been over the joyous earth,
When the blushing morning gave daylight birth:
The boughs and the grass were sown with pearls,
As an Eastern queen had unbound her curls,
And shower'd their tresses o'er leaf and flower;
And then I saw how the noontide hour
Kiss'd them away, as if the sun
Touch'd all with joy that it shone upon.
I saw a crimson rose, like an urn
Wherein a thousand odours burn;
It grew in the shade, but the place was bright
With the glory and glow of its fragrant light.—

Then a young lover came beside its dwelling,
To a maiden his gentle love-tale telling;
He pluck'd a rose from out of the shade—
'Twas not bright as the cheek on which it was laid:
The tale was told in the sunny noon,
Yet the same was heard by the rising moon.

I have been where the azure violet dwells;
I have sang the sweet peal of the lily bells;
I have pass'd on a diamond lake,
Where white swans summer pleasaunce take;
I saw the sun sink down in the sea,—
Blushes and bridal seem'd there to be.

Next o'er a noble city I swept,—
Calm, in the moonlight, its proud towers slept,
And its stately columns arose on the air
As cut from snow mountains—they were so fair.

Enter'd I next a stately hall;
The young and the gay were at festival:
The cheek of rose flush'd a redder dye;
Flash'd the wild light from the full dark eye;
Laugh'd the sweet lip with a sunny glance,
As the beauty went through the graceful dance.
And I saw the rich wine from the goblet spring,
Like the sudden flash of a spirit's wing.

Thence I went in the twilight dim,
I heard a convent's vesper hymn:
Beautiful were the vestal train
That dwelt at peace in their holy fane.
Paused I in air, to hear a song
Which rather might to heaven belong;
The very winds for delight were mute,—
And I know 'twas the poet's gifted lute.

Then came a sound of the trumpet afar,—
The nations were gathering together in war,
Like a cloud in the sunset; the banner was spread;
Victory had dyed it of meteor red;
Floating scarfs shew'd their broider'd fold,
White foam dash'd the bridles of gold:
Gallant it was the sight to see
Of the young and noble chivalrie.

In sooth, this earth is a lovely place;
Pass not in darkness over her face;
Yet call back thy words of doom—
They are too gay and too fair for the tomb.

ANGEL OF DEATH. Thou hast seen on earth,
as a passer by,
But the outward show of mortality:
Go, let the veil from thine eyes depart;
Search the secrets of every heart;

Look beyond what they seem to be;
Then come and say, are they not ripe for me.

SPIRIT. I have been over the green earth again
I have heard the voice of sorrow and pain;
I saw a shining almond-tree fling
Its silver wreath, like a gift, to Spring:
A cold breath came from the northern air;
The leaves were scatter'd, the boughs were bare.

I saw a ship launch'd on the sea,—
Queen of the waters she seem'd to be;
An hundred voices benizon gave,
As she cut her path through the frothing wave.
'Twas midnight—she anchor'd before a town,
Over which the sun had gone lingering down,
As loath to set upon what was so fair.
Now the smiling moon rode on the air,

Over towers and turrets, sailing in light,
And gardens, that seem'd to rejoice in night;
When the pealing thunder roll'd on the main,
And the town was awaked by the fiery rain,
And the cry of battle, for blood and fame
Follow'd wherever that war-ship came.

I heard, on the night-wind borne along,
Sweet as before, that gifted song.
But look'd I now on the minstrel's thought—
There many an inward sorrow wrought,
Work of wasting; pining for fame,
Yet loathing the gift of an empty name;
Hope, whose promise was little worth,
And Genius, tainted with cares of earth.
I have watch'd the young,—there are thorns with their bloom;
The gay,—but their inward heart was gloom;

I have seen the snake steal amid flowers;
Showers that came down on April hours;
And have seen—alas! 'tis but outward show—
The sunshine of yon green earth below:
Glad of rest must the wretched and way-worn be—
Angel of Death, they are ready for thee!

THE LOST STAR.

A LIGHT is gone from yonder sky,
A star has left its sphere;
The beautiful—and do they die
In yon bright world as here?
Will that star leave a lonely place,
A darkness on the night?—
No; few will miss its lovely face,
And none think heaven less bright!

What wert thou star of?—vanished one!
What mystery was thine?
Thy beauty from the east is gone:
What was thy sway and sign?

Wert thou the star of opening youth?—
And is it then for thee,
Its frank glad thoughts, its stainless truth,
So early cease to be?

Of hope?—and was it to express
How soon hope sinks in shade;
Or else of human loveliness,
In sign how it will fade?
How was thy dying? like the song,
In music to the last,
An echo flung the winds among,
And then for ever past?

Or didst thou sink as stars whose light
The fair moon renders vain?

The rest shone forth the next dark night,
Thou didst not shine again.
Didst thou fade gradual from the time
The first great curse was hurled,
Till lost in sorrow and in crime,
Star of our early world?

Forgotten and departed star!
A thousand glories shine
Round the blue midnight's regal car,
Who then remembers thine?
Save when some mournful bard like me
Dreams over beauty gone,
And in the fate that waited thee,
Reads what will be his own.

THE DANISH WARRIOR'S DEATH SONG.

Away, away! your care is vain;
No leech could aid me now;
The chill of death is at my heart,
Its damp upon my brow.

Weep not—I shame to see such tears
Within a warrior's eyes:
Away! how can ye weep for him
Who in the battle dies?

If I had died with idle head
Upon my lady's knee—
Had Fate stood by my silken bed,
Then might ye weep for me.

But I lie on my own proud deck
Before the sea and sky;
The wind that sweeps my gallant sails
Will have my latest sigh.

My banner floats amid the clouds,
Another droops below:
Well with my heart's best blood is paid
Such purchase from a foe.

Go ye and seek my halls, there dwells
A fair-hair'd boy of mine;
Give him my sword, while yet the blood
Darkens that falchion's shine.

Tell him that only other blood
Should wash such stains away;

And if he be his father's child,
There needs no more to say.

Farewell, my bark! farewell, my friends!
Now fling me on the wave;
One cup of wine, and one of blood,
Pour on my bounding grave.

THE CHANGE.

Thy features do not wear the light
They wore in happier days;
Though still there may be much to love,
There's little left to praise.

The rose has faded from thy cheek—
There's scarce a blush left now;
And there's a dark and weary sign
Upon thine altered brow.

Thy raven hair is dashed with gray,
Thine eyes are dim with tears;
And care, before thy youth is past,
Has done the work of years.

Beautiful wreck! for still thy face,
Though changed, is very fair;
Like beauty's moonlight, left to shew
Her morning sun was there.

Come, here are friends and festival,
Recall thine early smile;
And wear yon wreath, whose glad red rose
Will lend its bloom awhile.

Come, take thy lute, and sing again
The song you used to sing—
The bird-like song:—See, though unused,
The lute has every string.

What, doth thy hand forget the lute?
Thy brow reject the wreath?

Alas! whate'er the change above,
There's more of change beneath!

The smile may come, the smile may go,
The blush shine and depart;
But farewell when their sense is quench'd
Within the breaking heart.

And such is thine: 'tis vain to seek
The shades of past delight:
Fling down the wreath, and break the lute;
They mock our souls to-night.

THE ASPEN TREE.

THE quiet of the evening hour
  Was laid on every summer leaf;
That purple shade was on each flower,
  At once so beautiful, so brief.

Only the aspen knew not rest,
  But still, with an unquiet song,
Kept murmuring to the gentle west,
  And cast a changeful shade along.

Not for its beauty—other trees
  Had greener boughs, and statelier stem;
And those had fruit, and blossoms these,
  Yet still I chose this tree from them.

'Tis a strange thing, this depth of love
Which dwells within the human heart;
From earth below to heaven above,
In each, in all, it fain has part.

It must find sympathy, or make;
And hence beliefs, the fond, the vain,
The thousand shapes that fancies take,
To bind the fine connecting chain.

We plant pale flowers beside the tomb,
And love to see them droop and fade;
For every leaf that sheds its bloom
Seems like a natural tribute paid.

Thus Nature soothes the grief she shares:
What are the flowers we hold most dear?

The one whose haunted beauty wears
The sign of human thought or tear.

Why hold the violet and rose
A place within the heart, denied
To fairer foreign flowers, to those
To earlier memories allied?

Like those frail leaves, each restless thought
Fluctuates in my weary mind;
Uncertain tree! my fate was wrought
In the same loom where thine was twined.

And thus from other trees around
Did I still watch the aspen-tree,
Because in its unrest I found
Somewhat of sympathy with me.

THE VIOLET.

WHY better than the lady rose
  Love I this little flower?
Because its fragrant leaves are those
  I loved in childhood's hour.

Though many a flower may win my praise,
  The violet has my love;
I did not pass my childish days
  In garden or in grove:

My garden was the window-seat,
  Upon whose edge was set
A little vase—the fair, the sweet—
  It was the violet.

It was my pleasure and my pride;–
How I did watch its growth!
For health and bloom, what plans I tried,
And often injured both!

I placed it in the summer shower,
I placed it in the sun;
And ever, at the evening hour,
My work seemed half undone.

The broad leaves spread, the small buds grew,
How slow they seemed to be!
At last there came a tinge of blue,—
'Twas worth the world to me!

At length the perfume filled the room,
Shed from their purple wreath;

No flower has now so rich a bloom,
Has now so sweet a breath:

I gathered two or three,—they seemed
Such rich gifts to bestow;
So precious in my sight, I deemed
That all must think them so.

Ah! who is there but would be fain
To be a child once more;
If future years could bring again
All that they brought before?

My heart's world has been long o'erthrown,
It is no more of flowers;
Their bloom is past, their breath is flown,
Yet I recall those hours.

Let Nature spread her loveliest,
By spring or summer nurst;
Yet still I love the violet best,
Because I loved it first.

THE LITTLE SHROUD.

She put him on a snow-white shroud,
A chaplet on his head;
And gather'd early primroses
To scatter o'er the dead.

She laid him in his little grave—
'Twas hard to lay him there,
When spring was putting forth its flowers,
And every thing was fair.

She had lost many children—now
The last of them was gone;
And day and night she sat and wept
Beside the funeral stone.

One midnight, while her constant tears
Were falling with the dew,
She heard a voice, and lo! her child
Stood by her weeping too!

His shroud was damp, his face was white:
He said,—"I cannot sleep,
Your tears have made my shroud so wet;
Oh, mother, do not weep!"

Oh, love is strong!—the mother's heart
Was filled with tender fears;
Oh, love is strong!—and for her child
Her grief restrained its tears.

One eve a light shone round her bed,
And there she saw him stand—
Her infant, in his little shroud,
A taper in his hand.

"Lo! mother, see my shroud is dry,
And I can sleep once more!"
And beautiful the parting smile
The little infant wore.

And down within the silent grave
He laid his weary head;
And soon the early violets
Grew o'er his grassy bed.

The mother went her household ways—
Again she knelt in prayer,
And only asked of Heaven its aid
Her heavy lot to bear.

THE CHURCHYARD.

The shadow of the church falls o'er the ground,
Hallowing its place of rest; and here the dead
Slumber, where all religious impulses,
And sad and holy feelings, angel like,
Make the spot sacred with themselves, and wake
Those sorrowful emotions in the heart
Which purify it, like a temple meet
For an unearthly presence. Life, vain Life,
The bitter and the worthless, wherefore here
Do thy remembrances intrude?

THE willow shade is on the ground,
A green and solitary shade;
And many a wild flower on that mound
Its pleasant summer home has made.
And every breath that waves a leaf
Flings down upon the lonely flowers
A moment's sunshine, bright and brief—
A blessing looked by passing hours.

Those sweet, vague sounds are on the air,
Half sleep, half song — half false, half true,
As if the wind that brought them there
Had touched them with its music too.
It is the very place to dream
Away a twilight's idle rest;
Where Thought floats down a starry stream,
Without a shadow on its breast.

Where Wealth, the fairy gift, 's our own,
Without its low and petty cares;
Where Pleasure some new veil has thrown,
To hide the weary face she wears.
Where hopes are high, yet cares come not,
Those fellow-waves of life's drear sea,
Its froth and depth — where Love is what
Love only in a dream can be.

I cannot muse beside that mound—
I cannot dream beneath that shade—
Too solemn is the haunted ground
Where Death his resting-place has made.
I feel my heart beat but to think
Each pulse is bearing life away;
I cannot rest upon the grave,
And not feel kindred to its clay.

* * * * *

There is a name upon the stone—
Alas! and can it be the same—
The young, the lovely, and the loved?—
It is too soon to bear thy name.
Too soon!—oh no, 'tis best to die
Ere all of life save breath is fled:

Why live when feelings, friends, and hopes,
Have long been numbered with the dead?

But thou, thy heart and cheek were bright—
No check, no soil had either known;
The angel natures of yon sky
Will only be to thee thine own.
Thou knew'st no rainbow-hopes that weep
Themselves away to deeper shade;
Nor Love, whose very happiness
Should make the weakening heart afraid.

The green leaves e'en in spring they fall;
The tears the stars at midnight weep,
The dewy wild-flowers—such as these
Are fitting mourners o'er thy sleep.

For human tears are lava-drops,
That scorch and wither as they flow;
Then let them flow for those who live,
And not for those who sleep below.

Oh, weep for those whose silver chain
Has long been loosed, and yet live on—
The doomed to drink of life's dark wave,
Whose golden bowl has long been gone!
Ay, weep for those, the wearied, worn,
Dragged downward by some earthly tie,
By some vain hope, some vainer love,
Who loathe to live, yet fear to die.

CHANGE.

I would not care, at least so much, sweet Spring,
For the departing colour of thy flowers—
The green leaves early falling from thy boughs—
Thy birds so soon forgetful of their songs—
Thy skies, whose sunshine ends in heavy showers;—
But thou dostleave thy memory, like a ghost,
To haunt the ruined heart, which still recurs
To former beauty; and the desolate
Is doubly sorrowful when it recalls
It was not always desolate.

When those eyes have forgotten the smile they wear now,
When care shall have shadowed that beautiful brow—
When thy hopes and thy roses together lie dead,
And thy heart turns back pining to days that are fled—

Then wilt thou remember what now seems to pass
like the moonlight on water, the breath-stain on
glass:

Oh! maiden, the lovely and youthful, to thee,
How rose-touched the page of thy future must be!
By the past, if thou judge it, how little is there
But flowers that flourish, but hopes that are fair;
And what is thy present? a southern sky's spring,
With thy feelings and fancies like birds on the wing.
As the rose by the fountain flings down on the wave
Its blushes, forgetting its glass is its grave:
So the heart sheds its colour on life's early hour,
But the heart has its fading as well as the flower.
The charmed light darkens, the rose-leaves are gone,
And life, like the fountain, floats colourless on.
Said I, when thy beauty's sweet vision was fled,
How wouldst thou turn, pining, to days like the dead!

Oh! long ere one shadow shall darken that brow,
Wilt thou weep like a mourner o'er all thou lovest now;
When thy hopes, like spent arrows, fall short of their mark;
Or, like meteors at midnight, make darkness more dark;
When thy feelings lie fettered like waters in frost,
Or, scattered too freely, are wasted and lost:
For aye cometh sorrow, when youth has pass'd by—
What saith the Arabian? Its memory's a sigh.

THE THREE BROTHERS.

I.

They dwelt in a valley of sunshine, those Brothers;
Green were the palm-trees that shadowed their dwelling;
Sweet, like low music, the sound of the fountains
That fell from the rocks round their beautiful home:
There the pomegranate blushed like the cheek of the maiden
When she hears in the distance the step of her lover,
And blushes to know it before her young friends.
They dwelt in the valley—their mine was the corn-field
Heavy with gold, and in autumn they gathered
The grapes that hung clustering together like rubies:

Summer was prodigal there of her roses,
And the ringdoves filled every grove with their song.

II.

But those Brothers were weary; for hope like a glory
Lived in each bosom—that hope of the future
Which turns where it kindles the heart to an altar,
And urges to honour and noble achievement.
To this fine spirit our earth owes her greatest:
For the future is purchased by scorning the present,
And life is redeemed from its clay soil by fame.
They leant in the shades of the palm-trees at evening,
When a crimson haze swept down the side of the mountain:
Glorious in power and terrible beauty,
The Spirit that dwelt in the star of their birth

Parted the clouds and stood radiant before them:—
Each felt his destiny hung on that moment;
Each from his hand took futurity's symbol—
One took a sceptre, and one took a sword;
But a little lute fell to the share of the youngest,
And his Brothers turned from him and laughed him to scorn.

III.

And the King said, "The earth shall be filled with my glory:"
And he built him a temple—each porphyry column
Was the work of a life; and he built him a city—
A hundred gates opened the way to his palace,
(Too few for the crowds that there knelt as his slaves),
And the highest tower saw not the extent of the walls.
The banks of the river were covered with gardens;

And even when sunset was pale on the ocean,
The turrets were shining with taper and lamp,
Which filled the night-wind, as it passed them, with odours.
The angel of death came and summoned the monarch;
But he looked on the city, the fair and the mighty,
And said, "Ye proud temples, I leave ye my fame."

IV.

The conqueror went forth, like the storm over ocean,
His chariot-wheels red with the blood of the vanquished;
Nations grew pale at the sound of his trumpet,
Thousands rose up at the wave of his banners,
And the valleys were white with the bones of the slain.

He stood on a mountain, no foeman was near him,
Heavy and crimson his banner was waving
O'er the plain where his victories were written in blood,
And he welcomed the wound whence his life's tide was flowing;
For death is the seal to the conqueror's fame.

V.

But the youngest went forth with his lute—and the valleys
Were filled with the sweetness that sighed from its strings;
Maidens, whose dark eyes but opened on palaces,
Wept as at twilight they murmured his words.
He sang to the exile the songs of his country,
Till he dreamed for a moment of hope and of home;

He sang to the victor, who loosened his captives,
While the tears of his childhood sprang into his eyes.
He died—and his lute was bequeathed to the cypress,
And his tones to the hearts that loved music and song.

VI.

Long ages pass'd, from the dim world of shadows
These Brothers return'd to revisit the earth;
They came to revisit the place of their glory,
To hear and rejoice in the sound of their fame.
They looked for the palace—the temple of marble—
The rose-haunted gardens—a desert was there;
The sand, like the sea in its wrath, had swept o'er them,
And tradition had even forgotten their names.
The Conqueror stood on the place of his battles,

And his triumph had passed away like a vapour,
And the green grass was waving its growth of wild flowers;
And they, not his banner, gave name to the place.
They passed a king's garden, and there sat his daughter,
Singing a sweet song remember'd of old,
And the song was caught up, and sent back like an echo,
From a young voice that came from a cottage beside.
Then smiled the Minstrel, "You hear it, my Brothers,
My Songs yet are sweet on the lute and the lip."
King, not a vestige remains of your palaces;
Conqueror, forgotten the fame of your battles:
But the Poet yet lives in the sweetness of music —
He appeal'd to the heart, that never forgets.

EDITH.

Weep not, weep not, that in the spring
We have to make a grave;
The flowers will grow, the birds will sing,
The early roses wave;
And make the sod we're spreading fair,
For her who sleeps below:
We might not bear to lay her there
In winter frost and snow.

We never hoped to keep her long,
When but a fairy child,
With dancing step, and birdlike song,
And eyes that only smiled;

A something shadowy and frail
Was even in her mirth;
She look'd a flower that one rough gale
Would bear away from earth.

There was too clear and blue a light
Within her radiant eyes;
They were too beautiful, too bright,
Too like their native skies:
Too changeable the rose which shed
Its colour on her face,
Now burning with a passionate red,
Now with just one faint trace.

She was too thoughtful for her years,
Its shell the spirit wore;

And when she smiled away our fears,
We only feared the more.
The crimson deepen'd on her cheek,
Her blue eyes shone more clear,
And every day she grew more weak,
And every hour more dear.

Her childhood was a happy time,
The loving and beloved;
Yon sky which was her native clime
Hath but its own removed.
This earth was not for one, to whom
Nothing of earth was given;
'Twas but a resting-place, her tomb,
Between the world and heaven.

THE FORGOTTEN ONE.

No shadow rests upon the place
  Where once thy footsteps roved;
Nor leaf, nor blossom, bear a trace
  Of how thou wert beloved.
The very night dew disappears
Too soon, as if it spared its tears.

Thou art forgotten!—thou, whose feet
  Were listen'd for like song!
They used to call thy voice so sweet;—
  It did not haunt them long.
Thou, with thy fond and fairy mirth—
How could they bear their lonely hearth!

There is no picture to recall
  Thy glad and open brow;
No profiled outline on the wall
  Seems like thy shadow now;
They have not even kept to wear
One ringlet of thy golden hair.

When here we shelter'd last, appears
  But just like yesterday;
It startles me to think that years
  Since then are pass'd away.
The old oak tree that was our tent,
No leaf seems changed, no bough seems rent.

A shower in June—a summer shower,
  Drove us beneath the shade;

A beautiful and greenwood bower
The spreading branches made.
The raindrops shine upon the bough,
The passing rain—but where art thou?

But I forget how many showers
Have wash'd this old oak tree,
The winter and the summer hours,
Since I stood here with thee:
And I forget how chance a thought
Thy memory to my heart has brought.

I talk of friends who once have wept,
As if they still should weep;
I speak of grief that long has slept,
As if it could not sleep;

I mourn o'er cold forgetfulness,
Have I, myself, forgotten less?

I've mingled with the young and fair,
Nor thought how there was laid
One fair and young as any there,
In silence and in shade.
How could I see a sweet mouth shine
With smiles, and not remember thine?

Ah! it is well we can forget,
Or who could linger on
Beneath a sky whose stars are set,
On earth whose flowers are gone?
For who could welcome loved ones near,
Thinking of those once far more dear,

Our early friends, those of our youth?
We cannot feel again
The earnest love, the simple truth,
Which made us such friends then.
We grow suspicious, careless, cold;
We love not as we loved of old.

No more a sweet necessity,
Love must and will expand,
Loved and beloving we must be,
With open heart and hand,
Which only ask to trust and share
The deep affections which they bear.

Our love was of that early time;
And now that it is past,

It breathes as of a purer clime
Than where my lot is cast.
My eyes fill with their sweetest tears
In thinking of those early years.

It shock'd me first to see the sun
Shine gladly o'er thy tomb;
To see the wild flowers o'er it run
In such luxuriant bloom.
Now I feel glad that they should keep
A bright sweet watch above thy sleep.

The heaven whence thy nature came
Only recall'd its own;
It is Hope that now breathes thy name,
Though borrowing Memory's tone.

I feel this earth could never be
The native home of one like thee.

Farewell! the early dews that fall
  Upon thy grass-grown bed
Are like the thoughts that now recall
  Thine image from the dead.
A blessing hallows thy dark cell—
I will not stay to weep. Farewell!

THE ALTERED RIVER.

THOU lovely river, thou art now
As fair as fair can be,
Pale flowers wreathe upon thy brow,
The rose bends over thee.
Only the morning sun hath leave
To turn thy waves to light,
Cool shade the willow branches weave
When noon becomes too bright.
The lilies are the only boats
Upon thy diamond plain,
The swan alone in silence floats
Around thy charm'd domain.

The moss bank's fresh embroiderie,
With fairy favours starr'd;
Seems made the summer haunt to be
Of melancholy bard.
Fair as thou art, thou wilt be food
For many a thought of pain;
For who can gaze upon thy flood,
Nor wish it to remain
The same pure and unsullied thing
Where heaven's face is as clear
Mirror'd in thy blue wandering
As heaven's face can be here.
Flowers fling their sweet bonds on thy breast,
The willows woo thy stay,
In vain,—thy waters may not rest,
Their course must be away.

In yon wide world, what wilt thou find?
What all find—toil and care:
Your flowers you have left behind
Far other weight to bear.
The heavy bridge confines your stream,
Through which the barges toil,
Smoke has shut out the sun's glad beam,
Thy waves have caught the soil.
On—on—though weariness it be,
By shoal and barrier cross'd,
Till thou hast reach'd the mighty sea,
And there art wholly lost.
Bend thou, young poet, o'er the stream—
Such fate will be thine own;
Thy lute's hope is a morning dream,
And when have dreams not flown?

THE CITY OF THE DEAD.

'Twas dark with cypresses and yews, which cast
Drear shadows on the fairer trees and flowers—
Affection's latest signs. * * *
Dark portal of another world—the grave—
I do not fear thy shadow; and methinks,
If I may make my own heart oracle,—
The many long to enter thee, for thou
Alone canst reunite the loved and lost
With those who pine for them. I fear thee not;
I only fear my own unworthiness,
Lest it prove barrier to my hope, and make
Another parting in another world.

I.

LAUREL! oh, fling thy green boughs on the air,
There is dew on thy branches, what doth it do there?
Thou that art worn on the conqueror's shield,
When his country receives him from glory's red field;

Thou that art wreathed round the lyre of the bard,
When the song of its sweetness has won its reward.
Earth's changeless and sacred—thou proud laurel tree!
The tears of the midnight, why hang they on thee?

II.

Rose of the morning, the blushing and bright,
Thou whose whole life is one breath of delight;
Beloved of the maiden, the chosen to bind
Her dark tresses' wealth from the wild summer wind.
Fair tablet, still vow'd to the thoughts of the lover,
Whose rich leaves with sweet secrets are written all over;
Fragrant as blooming—thou lovely rose tree!
The tears of the midnight, why hang they on thee?

III.

Dark cypress! I see thee—thou art my reply,
Why the tears of the night on thy comrade trees lie;
That laurel it wreathed the red brow of the brave,
Yet thy shadow lies black on the warrior's grave.
That rose was less bright than the lip which it prest,
Yet thy sad branches bend o'er the maiden's last rest;
The brave and the lovely alike they are sleeping,
I marvel no more rose and laurel are weeping.

IV.

Yet, sunbeam of heaven! thou fall'st on the tomb
Why pausest thou by such dwelling of doom?
Before thee the grove and the garden are spread—
Why lingerest thou round the place of the dead?
Thou art from another, a lovelier sphere,
Unknown to the sorrows that darken us here.

Thou art as a herald of hope from above:—
Weep, mourner, no more o'er thy grief and thy love!
Still thy heart in its beating; be glad of such rest,
Though it call from thy bosom its dearest and best.
Weep no more that affection thus loosens its tie;
Weep no more that the loved and the loving must die;
Weep no more o'er the cold dust that lies at your feet:
But gaze on yon starry world—there ye shall meet.

V.

O heart of mine! is there not One dwelling there
To whom thy love clings in its hope and its prayer?
For whose sake thou numberest each hour of the day,
As a link in the fetters that keep me away?
When I think of the glad and the beautiful home,
Which oft in my dreams to my spirit hath come:
That when our last sleep on my eyelids hath prest,

That I may be with thee at home and at rest:
When wanderer no longer on life's weary shore,
I may kneel at thy feet, and part from thee no more:
While death holds such hope forth to soothe and to save,
Oh, sunbeam of heaven, thou may'st well light the grave!

ADMIRAL COLLINGWOOD.

METHINKS it is a glorious thing
To sail upon the deep;
A thousand sailors under you,
Their watch and ward to keep:
To see your gallant battle-flag
So scornfully unrolled,
As scarcely did the wild wind dare
To stir one crimson fold:

To watch the frigates scattered round,
Like birds upon the wing;
Yet know they only wait your will—
It is a glorious thing.

Our admiral stood on the deck,
And looked upon the sea;
He held the glass in his right hand,
And far and near looked he:

He could not see one hostile ship
Abroad upon the main;
From east to west, from north to south,
It was his own domain.
"Good news for England this, good news,"
Forth may her merchants fare;
Thick o'er the sea, no enemy
Will cross the pathway there.

A paleness came upon his cheek,
A shadow to his brow;

Alas! our good Lord Collingwood,
What is it ails him now?
Tears stand within the brave man's eyes,
Each softer pulse is stirred:
It is the sickness of the heart,
Of hope too long deferred.

He's pining for his native seas,
And for his native shore;
All but his honour he would give,
To be at home once more.
He does not know his children's fare;
His wife might pass him by,
He is so altered, did they meet,
With an unconscious eye:

He has been many years at sea,
He's worn with wind and wave;
He asks a little breathing space
Between it and his grave:
He feels his breath come heavily,
His keen eye faint and dim;
It was a weary sacrifice
That England asked of him.

He never saw his home again—
The deep voice of the gun,
The lowering of his battle-flag,
Told when his life was done.
His sailors walked the deck and wept;
Around them howled the gale;

And far away two orphans knelt—
A widow's cheek grew pale.

Amid the many names that light
Our history's blazoned line,
I know not one, brave Collingwood,
That touches me like thine.

THE FIRST GRAVE.

[This poem originated in the circumstance of the first grave being formed in the churchyard of the new church at Brompton. The place had been recently a garden, and some of the flowers yet shewed themselves among the grass, where this one tenant, the forerunner of its population, had taken up his last abode.]

A SINGLE grave!—the only one
In this unbroken ground,
Where yet the garden leaf and flower
Are lingering around.
A single grave!—my heart has felt
How utterly alone
In crowded halls, were breathed for me
Not one familiar tone;

The shade where forest-trees shut out
All but the distant sky;—
I've felt the loneliness of night
When the dark winds pass'd by;
My pulse has quickened with its awe,
My lip has gasped for breath;
But what were they to such as this—
The solitude of death!

A single grave!—we half forget
How sunder human ties,
When round the silent place of rest
A gathered kindred lies.
We stand beneath the haunted yew,
And watch each quiet tomb;
And in the ancient churchyard feel
Solemnity, not gloom:

The place is purified with hope,
The hope that is of prayer;
And human love, and heavenward thought,
And pious faith, are there.
The wild flowers spring amid the grass;
And many a stone appears,
Carved by affection's memory,
Wet with affection's tears.

The golden chord which binds us all
Is loosed, not rent in twain;
And love, and hope, and fear, unite
To bring the past again.
But *this* grave is so desolate,
With no remembering stone,
No fellow-graves for sympathy—
'Tis utterly alone.

I do not know who sleeps beneath,
His history or name—
Whether if, lonely in his life,
He is in death the same:
Whether he died unloved, unmourned,
The last leaf on the bough;
Or, if some desolated hearth
Is weeping for him now.

Perhaps this is too fanciful:—
Though single be his sod,
Yet not the less it has around
The presence of his God.
It may be weakness of the heart,
But yet its kindliest, best:
Better if in our selfish world
It could be less represt.

Those gentler charities which draw
Man closer with his kind—
Those sweet humanities which make
The music which they find.
How many a bitter word 'twould hush—
How many a pang 'twould save,
If life more precious held those ties
Which sanctify the grave!

THE FEAST OF LIFE.

BID thee to my mystic Feast,
Each one thou lovest is gather'd there;
Yet put thou on a mourning robe,
And bind the cypress in thy hair.
The hall is vast, and cold, and drear;
The board with faded flowers is spread;
Shadows of beauty flit around,
But beauty from which bloom has fled;

And music echoes from the walls,
But music with a dirge-like sound;
And pale and silent are the guests,
And every eye is on the ground.

Here, take this cup, though dark it seem,
And drink to human hopes and fears;
'Tis from their native element
The cup is fill'd—it is of tears.

What, turnest thou with averted brow?
Thou scornest this poor feast of mine;
And askest for a purple robe,
Light words, glad smiles, and sunny wine.
In vain—the veil has left thine eyes,
Or such these would have seem'd to thee;
Before thee is the Feast of Life,
But life in its reality!

FOLLOW ME!

A summer morning, with its calm, glad light,
Was on the fallen castle: other days
Were here remembered vividly; the past
Was even as the present, nay, perhaps more—
For that we do not pause to think upon.
First, o'er the arching gateway was a shield,
The sculptured arms defaced, but visible
Was the bold motto, "Follow me:" again
I saw it scrolled around the lofty crest
Which, mouldering, decked the ruined banquet-room:
A third time did I trace these characters—
On the worn pavement of an ancient grave
Was written "Follow me!"

FOLLOW me! 'tis to the battle-field—
No eye must turn, and no step must yield;
In the thick of the battle look ye to be:
On!—'tis my banner ye follow, and me.

Follow me!—'tis to the festal ring,
Where the maidens smile and the minstrels sing;
Hark! to our name is the bright wine poured:
Follow me on to the banquet-board!

Follow me!—'tis where the yew-tree bends,
When the strength and the pride of the victor ends
Pale in the thick grass the wild flowers bloom:
Follow me on to the silent tomb!

THE LEGACY OF THE LUTE.

COME, take the lute—the lute I loved,
'Tis all I have to offer thee;
And may it be less fatal gift
Than it has ever been to me.
My sigh yet lingers on the strings,
The strings I have not heart to break:
Wilt thou not, dearest! keep the lute
For mine—for the departed's sake?

But, pray thee, do not wake that lute;
Leave it upon the cypress tree;
I would have crushed its charmed chords,
But they so oft were strung to thee.

The minstrel-lute! oh, touch it not,
Or weary destiny is thine!
Thy life a twilight's haunted dream—
Thou, victim, at an idol's shrine.

Thy breath but lives on others' lips—
Thy hope, a thing beyond the grave,—
Thy heart, bare to the vulture's beak—
Thyself a bound and barter'd slave.
And yet a dangerous charm o'er all,
A bright but ignis-fatuus flame,
Luring thee with a show of power,
Dazzling thee with a blaze of fame.

It is to waste on careless hearts
The throbbing music of thine own;

To speak love's burning words, yet be
Alone—ay, utterly alone.
I sought to fling my laurel wreath
Away upon the autumn wind:
In vain,—'twas like those poison'd crowns
Thou may'st not from the brow unbind.

Predestined from my birth to feed
On dreams, yet watch those dreams depart;
To bear through life—to feel in death—
A burning and a broken heart.
Then hang it on the cypress bough,
The minstrel-lute I leave to thee;
And be it only for the wind
To wake its mournful dirge for me.

THE FESTIVAL.

THE young and the lovely are gathered:
Who shall talk of our wearisome life,
And dwell upon weeds and on weeping—
The struggle, the sorrow, the strife?
The hours of our being are coloured,
And many are coloured with rose;
Though on some be a sign and a shadow,
I list not to speak now of those.

Thro' the crimson blind flushes the splendour
Of lamps, like large pearls which some fay

Has swelled with her breath till their lustre,
If softer, is as bright as of day.
Beneath the verandah are flowers—
Camellias like ivory wrought
With the grace of a young Grecian sculptor,
Who traced what some Oread brought;

The harp to the flute is replying—
'Tis the song of a far-distant land;
But never, in vineyard or valley,
Assembled a lovelier band.
Come thou, with thy glad golden ringlets,
Like rain which is lit by the sun—
With eyes, the bright spirit's bright mirrors—
Whose cheek and the rose-bud are one.

While he of the lute and the laurel
For thee has forgotten the throng,
And builds on thy fairy-like beauty
A future of sigh and of song.
Ay, listen, but as unto music
The wild wind is bearing away,
As sweet as the sea-shells at evening,
But far too unearthly to stay.

For the love-dream that haunts the young poet
Is coloured too much by his mind—
A fabric of fancy and falsehood,
But never for lasting designed.
For he lives but in beauty—his visions
Inspire with their passion his strain;
And the spirit so quick at impression
Was never meant long to retain.

But another is passing before me—
Oh, pause! let me gaze on thy brow:
I've seen thee, fair lady, thrice lovely,
But never so lovely as now.
Thou art changed since those earlier numbers
When thou wert a vision to me;
And, copies from some fairest picture,
My heroines were painted from thee.

Farewell! I shall make thee no longer
My sweet summer queen of romance;
No more will my princes pay homage,
My knights for thy smile break the lance,
Confess they were exquisite lovers,
The fictions that knelt at thy throne;
But the graceful, the gallant, the noble,
What fancy could equal thine own?

Farewell! and henceforth I enshrine thee
Mid the earlier dreams that have past
O'er my lute, like the fairies by moonlight,
To leave it more lonely at last.
Alas! it is sad to remember
The once gentle music now mute;
Ah! many a chord hath time stolen
Alike from my heart and my lute.

'Tis midnight—but think not of slumber,
There are dreams enow floating around;
But, ah! our soft dreams while thus waking
Are aye the most dangerous found.
Like the note of a lute was that whisper—
Fair girl, do not raise those dark eyes:
Love only could breathe such a murmur;
And what will Love bring thee but sighs?

And thou, thou pale dreamer! whose forehead
Is flushed with the circle's light praise,
Oh! let it not dwell on thy spirit—
How vain are the hopes it will raise!
The praise of the crowd and the careless,
Just caught by a chance and a name,
Oh! take it as pleasant and passing,
But never mistake it for fame!

Look for fame from the toil of thy midnight,
When thy rapt spirit eagle-like springs;
But, for the gay circle now passing,
Take only the butterfly's wings.
The flowers around us are fading—
Meet comrades for revels are they;
And the lamps overhead are decaying—
How cold seems the coming of day!

There fling off the wreath and the sandal,
And bid the dark curtains round close;
For your cheek from the morning's tired slumber
Must win its sweet exile the rose.
What, weary and saddened! this evening
Is an earnest what all pleasures seem—
A few eager hours' enjoyment—
A toil, a regret, and a dream!

THE MIDDLE TEMPLE GARDENS.

THE fountain's low singing is heard on the wind,
Like a melody bringing sweet fancies to mind;
Some to grieve, some to gladden: around them they
cast
The hopes of the morrow, the dreams of the past.
Away in the distance is heard the vast sound,
From the streets of the city that compass it round,
Like the echo of mountains, or ocean's deep call;
Yet that fountain's low singing is heard over all.

The turf and the terrace slope down to the tide
Of the Thames, that sweeps onwards—a world at
its side:

And dark the horizon, with mast and with sail
Of the thousand tall ships that have weathered the gale:
While beyond the arched bridge the old abbey appears,
Where England has garnered the glories of years.
There the royal, the lovely, the gifted, the brave,
Haunt the heart with a poetry born of the grave.

Still and lone mid the tumult these gardens extend,
The elm and the lime over flower-beds bend;
And the sunshine rains in as the light leaves are stirred,
When away from the nest he has built springs the bird.

The boat, and the barge, and the wave, have grown
red;
And the sunset has crimsoned the boughs over head:
But the lamps are now shining, the colours are gone,
And the garden lies shadowy, silent, and lone.

There are lights in the casements: how weary the
ray
That asks from the night-time the toils of the day!
I fancy I see the brow bent o'er the page,
Whose youth wears the paleness and wrinkles of age.
The hour may be coming when fortune and fame
May crown the endeavour, and honour the name:
But the toil has been long that too early began;
And the judge and the peer is a world-weary man.

The robe and the ermine, by few they are won:
How many sink down ere the race be half run!
What struggles, what hopes, what despair may have been,
Where sweep those dark branches of shadowy green!
What crowds are around us, what misery is there,
Could the heart, like the face which conceals it, lay bare!
But we know not each other—we seek not to know
What the social world hides in the darkness below.

I lean in the window, and hear the low tune
Of the fountain, now bright with the new risen moon.
In the chamber within are the gay and the young;
The light laugh is laughed, and the sweet song is sung.

I turn to their mirth, but it is in a mask—
The jest is an omen, the smile is a task.
A slave in a pageant, I walk through life's part,
With smiles on the lip, and despair at the heart.*

* I know not that I have ever been more struck than with the beauty of the Middle Temple Gardens, as seen on a still summer evening. There is about it such a singular mixture of action and repose. The trees cast an undisturbed shadow on the turf; the barges rest tranquilly on the dark river; only now and then the dim outline of a scarcely seen sail flits by; the very lamps in the distance seem as if shining in their sleep. But the presence of life is around. Lights appear in most of the windows; and there comes upon the air the unceasing murmur of the city around. Nothing is distinct; all varieties of noise blending into one deep sound. But the little fountain is heard amid it all; the ear does not lose a note of its low sweet music: it is the poetry of the place, or, rather, the voice of the poetry with which it is filled.

THE END.

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